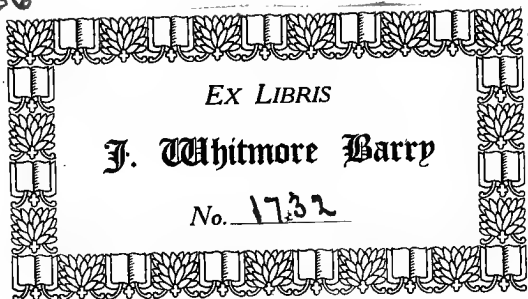


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HERNANI



HERNANI

A TRAGEDY

BY

FREDERICK BROCK



LONDON

DUCKWORTH AND CO.

HENRIETTA ST. COVENT GARDEN

1912

A653709

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PREFATORY NOTE

IN putting this work before the public, it is right that I should state exactly the extent of my indebtedness to Victor Hugo's "Hernani."

Let me say at once that this play is neither a translation nor, as we commonly understand the term, an adaptation of the French original. I have merely borrowed the story of Victor Hugo's drama, and, with the exception of a few lines, retold it in my own way.

There is nothing cosmopolitan about the Drama. Sentiments and actions that appeal to the people of one country may make little or no appeal to the people of another. This is constantly proved by books and plays—which have been decidedly successful in the country of their conception proving quite unattractive when translated elsewhere.

It is for this reason that I have disregarded Victor Hugo's treatment of the story of Hernani. I have handled the story just as I should, had I myself invented it—with this exception, that I have followed to a considerable extent Victor Hugo's setting and arrangement.

Whether Victor Hugo's play was based upon any other work I do not know. I have made no inquiry.

Neither do I know how much, if any, of it was taken from the historian.

There are a few passages in this work which might, without a word of explanation, be misunderstood. I refer to those passages in which things are said that would probably not be allowed to be said "on the stage." I ask the reader to accept these as necessary to the definition of character.

If Don Carlos the King was, as I understand, something of a libertine, then it would follow naturally that his companions would not be over serious nor over proper sort of gentlemen—that they would, in a word, be full of much naughtiness themselves, and would express themselves with decided freedom and looseness.

So, certain remarks made by Don Matias must not be regarded as needless. It must not be thought that I have put them into his mouth for the mere sake of making them. Through the character of the man I have tried to define that of the master, and at the same time, because it is the man and not the master who speaks, sufficiently to preserve, as is necessary for the purposes of the play, the outward state and dignity of the king.

F. B.

MAYFIELD, SUSSEX,

March 1912.

CHARACTERS OF THE PLAY

DON CARLOS, *King of Spain*

DON RUY, *Duke de Silva*

HERNANI, *an outlaw*

DON MATIAS

DON RODERIGO

DON SANCHE

DON FRANCISCO

STEWARD

JESTER

PAGE

A MOUNTAINEER

A GENTLEMAN

DONA SOL DE SILVA, *Don Ruy's cousin*

JOSEPHA, *her old nurse*

A LADY

*Ladies and gentlemen of the court ; soldiers,
servants, musicians, &c. &c.*

Period : 1519

ACT I. THE KING

SCENE : *Dona Sol's bedroom in the Palace de Silva*

ACT II. THE BANDIT

SCENE : *Outside the Palace de Silva*

ACT III. THE DUKE

SCENE : *A room in Don Ruy's chateau a few leagues
from Saragossa*

ACT IV. THE BRIDAL

SCENE I. : *A terrace of the Palace de Silva*

SCENE II. : *The bridal-chamber (same as in ACT I.)*

PLACE : *Saragossa in Spain, and its neighbourhood*

ACT I

SCENE. *Saragossa. DONA SOL'S bedroom in the Palace of the DUKE DE SILVA. When the curtain rises JOSEPHA is discovered seated. A knock heard at back.*

JOSEPHA. What! Here so soon!

[Knock repeated.

Yes, 'tis the secret stair
From which the knocking comes. I'll open to him.

[Goes up to unlock door.

It is Love's eager haste, which never did,
Nor ever will, save 'neath compulsion's hand,
Wait its appointed hour.

[Admits DON CARLOS.

Come in, young sir.
Your love's outsped the clock, and got you here
Something too soon.

[DON CARLOS removes his hat.

What! Not Hernani! Oh!

Help! Help!

[DON CARLOS seizes her by the arm.

DON CARLOS. Be still! Cry "help" again—
Say but two words—you'll never speak them more.

[*A pause. JOSEPHA looks up into his face
terrified.*

Is this where Dona Sol de Silva lives,
The fair betrothed of the old Duke Pastrana?
Don Ruy Gomez, Grandee of Castille!

[*JOSEPHA makes no reply.*

Tell me, duenna, is it the old duke
Who every night visits your youthful mistress
And who, sometimes disdaining doors, will climb
With ancient legs up yonder balcony,
And enter through the window? Is it he?
Or does the fair and youthful Dona Sol
Within one lover's house receive another—
Whisper her love into a young man's ears,
Under an old man's nose? Say, is it so?

JOSEPHA. You have forbidden me to speak two
words.

DON CARLOS. This may be said in one. Say "yes"
or "no."

Is Dona Sol thy mistress? Answer.

JOSEPHA. Yes.

DON CARLOS. The duke's away from home? Be
quick,

JOSEPHA. He is.

DON CARLOS. And the young man's expected?
Answer.

JOSEPHA. Yes.

DON CARLOS. Then quickly—hide me.

JOSEPHA. Hide you ?

DON CARLOS. Ay.

JOSEPHA. In here ?

Hide you in here ?

DON CARLOS. Why not ? I wish to know
How far these two have trod their secret path :

How deep into love's orchard they are gone.

JOSEPHA. For shame !

DON CARLOS. If walls could speak—

JOSEPHA. For shame !

DON CARLOS. I'd question
them.

JOSEPHA. Their love is pure—pure as the dew of
heaven.

It is contained in hearts as free of stain

As wild flowers freshly blown.

DON CARLOS. I would give much
To know you speak the truth.

JOSEPHA. I speak the truth.

DON CARLOS. I would give much to know it. Will
you hide me ?

JOSEPHA. No sir, I will not.

DON CARLOS. Will not, woman !

JOSEPHA. No.

What man art thou that under cloak of night
Breaks thus upon a young girl's privacy ?

DON CARLOS. A man who sometimes does what
others do.

You are not always so severe, old lady.

Listen to me. Here is a purse of gold,
And here a dagger. Say, which will you have?

JOSEPHA. Alas! what can I do? Oh, I am helpless.

DON CARLOS. Take then the purse and hide me.

JOSEPHA. Go in there,

DON CARLOS. Into that cupboard? Ha! an empty cupboard.

Duenna, is not this unusual?

What does thy mistress here with empty closets
So close beside her bed? Oho! A rat!

JOSEPHA. A rat?

DON CARLOS. Not in the cupboard. Come confess!
Will my legs be the first unskirted pair
That have been pressed in here? Whoever heard
Of naked closets in a lady's chamber;
Without so much as one small shoe to stand
As evidence of service! 'Tis suspicious!
Yet stay. Perhaps 'tis here. wherein by day
You stall your ancient mount.

JOSEPHA. My ancient mount?

DON CARLOS. I mean your old broom-handle. Farewell, witch.

[Gets into cupboard.]

JOSEPHA. Methinks thou art the devil.

DON CARLOS. If I be,

Then rest assured that we shall meet again.
Therefore, be careful.

JOSEPHA. O! What shall I do?

A man concealed in my young mistress' room!

DON CARLOS [*looking out of cupboard*]. Is't then
a woman whom you are expecting?

JOSEPHA. Hush! hush! My mistress comes! Quick!
Close the door!

[*He closes door of cupboard.*]

Enter DONA SOL.

DONA SOL. Josepha?

JOSEPHA. Madam?

DONA SOL. Did you call just now?

JOSEPHA. I may have spoken, madam, in my sleep.

DONA SOL [*with a smile*]. Is it so late?

JOSEPHA. The Palace has been still

This hour past.

DONA SOL. I know it, good Josepha.

And I do wrong to keep you from your rest.

My kind old nurse. [*Kneels by her side.*]

JOSEPHA. Where have you been, dear child?

DONA SOL. Sitting beside my window in the dark,
Watching the valley lights as one by one
They disappeared. The last has been put out,
And now the stars, like those of some far city,
Shine coldly down on sleeping Saragosse.
I have been telling to the rustling trees
My love for dear Hernani; which in turn
Have whispered it along to one another;
And borne it through the night. Ah! You may
smile!

But, if 'tis not the trees, something it is.

That serves as messenger 'twixt parted loves,

And carries thoughts that stir, like summer breeze,
Our hearts, and give us joy in solitude.
How wonderful is love! Until that day
On which mine eyes did first Hernani see,
That which I was, was to me but a word,
Having no meaning. But since that dear hour
When we did meet—O! How each hour since then
Has told me what I am. O! spirit of Love!
How strong thou art, and 'neath thy potent spell,
In thy delights what subtle pains do dwell.

[*The clock strikes.*

Was that the clock? Hernani should be here.

[*Goes to window.*

JOSEPHA. How can I tell her there's a man in there?

[*A knock heard at back.*

DONA SOL. Hark! Some one knocks! Quickly
Josepha! Open!

Art thou asleep! [*Knock*] There, there! He knocks
again.

JOSEPHA. Dear mistress, for one moment hear me!

DONA SOL. O

Go to the door! What! Must I go myself?

[*JOSEPHA goes up and admits HERNANI.*

DONA SOL. Hernani!

HERNANI. Ah! My love!

[*They embrace. Exit JOSEPHA.*

My lovely love!

Cover my dazzled eyes. I have not power
Myself to close them.

DONA SOL [*smiling*]. Is the light so strong?

HERNANI. Yes. 'Tis the light of heaven that's in
thy face,

Which blinds and will not let me look away.

DONA SOL. Foolish Hernani!

[*Places her hands across his eyes.*]

HERNANI. Ah! What gentle hands!

Not nature's self with all her wisdom made

More gentle curtains to shut out the light,

Than these dear hands, which on my eyelids rest

As light as do those lids upon my eyes.

DONA SOL. Dear foolish love. O! What a lengthy
day

This day hath seemed. Methinks the sun-god's
steeds

Did not this morn above the eastern line

Pull up his flaming car. But, in their stead,

Four crawling things, with shells upon their backs,

Were harnessed to it. Has the day not seemed

Thus long?

HERNANI. Indeed, dear love, it has. And yet

To me, 'twere worth a thousand hours of waiting,

And then a thousand, and a thousand more,

If at their close, one little hour were left,

To share alone with thee. How I do love thee!

DONA SOL. Dearest, thy cloak is wet! Is't raining
then?

HERNANI [*with a smile*]. I do not know.

DONA SOL. It must be. And an hour ago the
heavens

Were all a-throb with stars. Where is Josepha?
Let me undo thy cloak. Josepha!

HERNANI.

Hush!

DONA SOL. No one can hear us. All the Palace
sleeps,

HERNANI. What if the Duke—

DONA SOL. The Duke's away from home.

Only old Sancho in his hooded chair
Sits nodding by the fire in the hall;
And he's so deaf, we might with safety speak
A yard above his head. Josepha!

JOSEPHA [*entering*].

Madam?

DONA SOL. Carry this cloak into the adjoining
room,

And spread it near the fire.

[*Exit* JOSEPHA.

Come, sit beside me.

HERNANI. How long, dear, may I stay?

DONA SOL.

I would to that

That I might answer "till I tire of thee,"

For then thou'd'st never leave me.

HERNANI.

How long, sweet?

DONA SOL. Not later than the clock's next warning
chime.

HERNANI. That's but an hour.

DONA SOL.

Is not an hour enough?

HERNANI. Enough?—What's that? Did'st thou
not hear a noise?

Like some one moving. Are the doors all locked?

DONA SOL. Why should they be? Who's likely to
intrude?

What need to lock my doors when thou art here?

HERNANI. Dost think the Duke would smile to see
me here?

DONA SOL. Still thinking of the Duke?

HERNANI. There's not an hour,
Since we first met, I have not thought of him,
And with the thought not cursed him. Am I
wrong?

Shall I not curse the man who stands between
Me and my love ; and stands there as my rival ?

Shall I not curse him doubly, trebly, when
I think upon his years. Love's sweet fulfilment
Must ever be an act of spoliation.

What shall't be called when the despoiler's hands
Are those of wrinkled age? What's to be said for't!

What joy—that he should mate himself with youth—
Has he the power to render or receive,

Who has passed o'er life's summit, and descends
With stumbling footsteps downward to the grave?

What can he learn in the last hours of life,
That he should covet such companionship?

If in his youth he slept, he'll learn no more
Of youth's delights and native ecstasies,

Than of the morning's splendour he who sleeps
The fresh, pulsating, matin hours away,

Can learn by looking at the eastern sky,
When it is lighted by a dying sun.

There's naught upon the earth can vindicate
A union such as this. It violates

All natural laws. The thing is horrible.

DONA SOL. Dear heart, why fret o'er what will
never be?

HERNANI. I sicken, when I think it might have
been.

How camest thou, love, to sanction such a thing?

DONA SOL. Sanction? I did not sanction. I
obeyed.

The Duke's my guardian, and I obeyed.

Besides, the king desires it.

HERNANI. The king!

DONA SOL. I have been told he does.

HERNANI. Who told thee this?

DONA SOL. A lady of the court; and more than this,
She afterwards confided.

HERNANI. More? What more?

DONA SOL. Thou wilt be angry if I tell it thee.

HERNANI. I pray thee tell me what it was she
said.

DONA SOL. She told me that the king had noticed
me;

Had paid me pretty compliments; said things

Which she would not repeat, lest I grew vain.

Then, on the instant, did she break her word,

And tell me all the king had said of me—

Which I will not repeat, for both our sakes.

I noticed that she spoke with smiling lips

And all the while did keep her eyes avert.

Then, following a silence, suddenly,

From under drooping lids she looked at me;

And when I turned away she seemed amused:

Called me a child and said I should be proud.

What did she mean?—Hernani!

HERNANI.

Heaven and Earth!

What's this you say! The king! You say the king!

DONA SOL. Alas! Why did I speak of this to thee!

HERNANI. Peace! Peace!

DONA SOL. Hernani?

HERNANI.

'Tis the hour—

The hour that I have waited for is come!

Destiny's hand now knocks upon the door.

It is the hour!

DONA SOL. What hour? What hour, love?

HERNANI. The hour which brings Don Carlos in my path;

When he and I, guided by Fate, shall look
Into each other's eyes.

DONA SOL. What dost thou mean?

What is the king to thee?

HERNANI.

My bitterest foe.

DONA SOL. Thy foe! Thy foe!

HERNANI.

Listen a moment to me.

For thirty years, more years than I have lived,
My father struggled with Don Carlos' father.

DONA SOL. Thy father?

HERNANI. Ay! And in the end was vanquished
Upon the scaffold did he bow his head—
The one time in his life he ever bowed it—
And so, he died. This happened long ago, .

When I was still a child. But there's no time,
Nor circumstance, nor influence can dull
The memory of a dear father's death.
How well do I remember that sad eve
My loss was told to me. There shone that night
In the cold vault of heaven a blood-red star.
Sleepless, I watched it from my bedroom window,
As from its height it made its slow decline,
And seemed to speak to me until the last,
I said: "Thou shalt be to me a reminder
Of this day's bloody work. Each time I meet
Thy glowing eye bent on me from the heavens,
I'll think my father speaks, and live these hours,
These tearful hours again." Then straight I fell
Upon my knees; and from my young bruised heart
I swore avengement 'gainst the house of Carlos;
And I will keep my oath. Not I alone
Am sworn to this. My bugle-horn's clear call
Has power to summon thirty hundred men
Unto my side. These are the men,
Whose fathers died fighting my father's cause,
Which now is mine. Then let the king beware!
Fate draws him in my path! Let him beware!

DONA SOL. Hernani, I'm afraid. See how thy
words
Have made me tremble. Tell me—who art thou?

HERNANI. I am what thou hast known me, save in
name;
And that, while I am what I am, must be
Put by. It is, as all names are, my crown;

But I have lost my kingdom.
Only upon the head of one who wields
Sovereign power doth kingly crown sit nobly ;
And so it is with names. A man should be
That which his name proclaims him to the world,
Or else suppress it. O ! how many there are,
Who heed not this and their great after-loss.
We build up reputations ; then, declining
Either to impotence or disrepute,
Will still to prominence hang out the flag,
Which we by high achievement made renowned ;
Failing to see that by our later acts
We mar its former lustre. Therefore, now,
Since what my title says I ought to be
I have not means to be, I will not wear it.
I am Hernani. Know me by that name.
'Tis one that must for ever in my ears
Be a sweet sound—thy lips have made it so.
Think of me as Hernani of the hills,
Hernani, the outlaw, on whose head is set
A heavy price—Hernani the proscribed,
The leader of a dreaded banditti.
These things I am. Hernani is my name.
So think of me ; and one thing more than all,
Which I must be to thee until life's end—
Think of me as thy lover and thy friend.

DONA SOL. O ! broken hour ! With what quick
speed you come,
Cold care, upon the lonely hours of waiting.
Your kind's unwelcome harbinger, you leave

No space between, in which may be enjoyed
What has been waited for.

HERNANI. My gentle love!

DONA SOL. Hernani, in my heart there's come a
sadness,

Sprung from I know not where.

HERNANI. It was my words,

The words I spake just now have frightened thee.

DONA SOL. I do not know. As lives are born ill-
fated,

So are loves. Their composition oft

As if in mockery, most capable

Of rich productiveness. Is our love so?

HERNANI. O, think it not, except the latter part;

Which we ere long may put to happy proof.

Listen, dear Sol. Within the next few days

I must away from here. There's news to hand

The king makes preparation to attack me.

An armed force of several thousand men

Is gathered in the town. I must be gone

Back to my mountain keep. Wilt thou come with
me?

DONA SOL. Go with thee?

HERNANI. Ay! Go with me as my bride.

Nay, make not answer upon Love's quick spur!

Think well before thou sayest. Make contrast

Between the life I offer thee and that

Which still awaits thee, if we say "good-bye."

The duke is wealthy, prosperous, and great;

And all that wealth, prosperity and power

Have power to give, he will give unto thee.
Thou wilt be mistress of his many mansions,
And in thy lap fair fortune's hands will pour
The last of her abundance. All thy days,
Surrounding thee, will be that stately calm
Which rank with wealth conjoined have power to
give.

A peaceful prospect ever in the view ;
And in the retrospect but this one cloud—
Our severed love—whose memory the years
Will stealthily dissolve : only this cloud,
To steal upon thy heart and wake a sigh.

DONA SOL. And if I go with thee ?

HERNANI.

Ah ! Who shall say

What trials lie before thee.

DONA SOL.

But, is't not

That way that love lies too ? O, let the trials
Be many as they may ; their sum of pain
Can never equal what must be endured,
Should we be parted. I will go with thee.
I'll go with thee, Hernani, wheresoe'er
Thou ask me to. There is no pain, no hardship ;
There is no danger, nay, there is no death,
That I will not endure for thy dear sake.

HERNANI. If ever in my life I'm harsh with thee,
Remind me of this hour. Now listen, love.
To-morrow night at midnight, I'll be here.
Be thou prepared to start upon the instant,
So that by daybreak we may be secure
Upon the mountain slopes that southward lie.

I know a holy man who will perform
That kindest of priestly offices,
Which we shall ask of him. So have no fear,
Either for thy young honour or thy safety,
Which both to me are dear as life itself.

[DON CARLOS comes from cupboard.

Thou wilt expect me then to-morrow midnight?

DONA [SOL. I shall expect thee, love. Till then
good-bye.

[*They embrace. Then DONA SOL, looking up,
sees DON CARLOS standing near.*

Hernani! Look behind thee!

[HERNANI wheels round. Then starts back, his
hand on his sword. A long silence.

HERNANI.

Who art thou?

What dost thou here?

DON CARLOS. Those are two questions, sir,
Which I would ask of thee. Is not this lady
The Dona Sol de Silva? Is not this
The room wherein she sleeps? A lady's bedroom
Should be to all men, save her husband, private.
Art thou this lady's husband? If thou be,
I'll answer thy two questions willingly,
But if thou canst not claim such privilege,
Of our respective rights to enter here,
Methinks mine are at least as good as thine.

HERNANI. Why then conceal thyself within a cupboard?

DON CARLOS. He learns the most who most conceals himself.

HERNANI. Thou art a spy, then. Say—what would'st thou learn?

DON CARLOS. I said I would not answer ; yet I will :
At least, this one of thy two questions.

I'd learn, young sir, how far this lady's charms
Have tempted thee to go in love with her.

HERNANI. Be careful what you say !

DON CARLOS. Unfortunately
I've scarcely heard a word of what's been said.
I should have done much better 'neath the bed.
Though, faith ! since for this lady's love I sigh,
'Tis not beneath her bed I'd ask to lie.

HERNANI. Stand on thy guard ! *[Draws sword.]*

DONA SOL. Hernani !

HERNANI. On thy guard !
One of us two shall not go hence alive.

DON CARLOS. That's as you please. *[Draws.]*
Though, for the lady's sake,
I'd rather we had fought elsewhere than this,
A dead man's presence here will surely be
Hard to account for !

HERNANI. When I have killed thee, sir,
I'll bear thee hence and throw thee in the street.

DON CARLOS. Madam, I promise if I do the killing,
That I'll perform for thee an equal service.
Now let's decide which of us plays the dog,
And goes into the kennel. I'm ready, sir.

[They fight.]

DONA SOL. Jesu Maria! O! Merciful heaven!

[Falls on her knees and prays.]

Enter JOSEPHA.

JOSEPHA. Ah! Gentlemen, desist! Put up your swords!

Good gentlemen! My master is returned.

DON CARLOS. *[To HERNANI.]* One moment, sir.

[Turns to JOSEPHA.]

What is't you say? Thy master—

JOSEPHA. My master is returned.

DON CARLOS. Dost mean the Duke?

JOSEPHA. He's in the court-yard, sir, with his escôrt.
And madame, see! The window is left open;
Which doth explain their halt this side the house.
They have o'erheard the noise.

HERNANI. What's to be done?

DONA SOL. To go at once!

DON CARLOS. Or hide!

JOSEPHA. They cannot go.

DONA SOL. Why can they not?

JOSEPHA. Madam, the door is guarded.

DONA SOL. That door?

JOSEPHA. Ay, madam.

DONA SOL. Then you cannot go.

DON CARLOS. Lady, you use a word I do not know.
Cannot is not in my vocabulary.

If twenty thousand men did guard yon door,
They would not stay me, did I choose to go.
But, sir, we'll neither go nor will we hide:

I've had enough of cupboards. We'll stay here,
And face the old Duke's thunder, which, you'll see,
Will not go further than the first loud clap.
Old lady, sit, and let some pleasant thought
Dispel that scared-hen's look from off thy face.
Sir, stand you here, a little way behind me!
And let us, lady, sit together here.

HERNANI. Who are you, sir, that you should ask us
this?

DON CARLOS. You will know soon enough. Stand
further off.

You are to play a thinking part for once.
Remember this, and act accordingly ;
Which is to say, say nothing. Gentle lady,
The reason I did give for being here,
And which did draw and set two swords in play,
That reason, if it erred in any way,
Did err upon the side of modesty.
It was the truth ; yet not the truth it told.
To say 'tis love for thee doth bring me here,
Is to reveal the truth of my regard
No further than thine outward maiden beauties
Reveal the sum and centre of thy charms.
That is the truth. Wilt thou remember it,
When to explain my presence in this room
I shall say what is but in part the truth ?

[Loud knock heard.]

Ah! Here's the Duke. God send him credulous!

[Knock repeated.]

He hits the door again. Are we locked in?
Ah, no! For see! Yond comes a pair of legs.

Enter DON RUY, DUKE DE SILVA.

DON RUY. What scene is this? How come these
men in here?

DON CARLOS [*rising*]. Don Ruy!

DON RUY [*in surprise*]. What!

DON CARLOS. Be careful how
you speak, now.

'Tis dangerous for a man to loose his tongue
In anger till he knows who 'tis he scolds.
Therefore speak cautiously. So will you save
Yourself the making of apologies,
And us the need to hear them.

DON RUY. By Saint John!

It is the king!

DON CARLOS [*smiling*]. It is.

DONA SOL [*aside*]. The king!

HERNANI [*aside*]. The king!

DON CARLOS. 'Tis said that kings can do no wrong.
My friend

Your thoughts which are writ large upon your
forehead,

Do scarce endorse the saying. You are thinking
That nearer wrong than I have gone to-night
A king did never go. Is it not so?

DON RUY. My lord, you do not read my brow
aright.

The finding of your gracious presence here

Has woke in me no other feeling than
One of most deep surprise. If you read other,
'Tis but the afterglow of that hot anger
With which, I do confess, I was afire,
When but a moment back, in ignorance
Who it was here, I made my so rude entrance.

DON CARLOS. I will explain how 'tis you find me
here.

DON RUY. My lord, I do beseech you, do not so ;
Else must I think my words are not believed ;
And that your Majesty ascribes to me
Feelings which no true subject should possess
'Gainst what his king may do. If I should ask
What thing it is has brought your Highness here—
Which were to show at once in that one lapse
From reverence forgetfulness of all
The reverence that's owing to a king—
'Twould be to ask the giver of an honour—
To ask, as if in resentment of his kindness—
The reason why he gives it. 'Tis enough
That it's your Majesty I find in here.

DON CARLOS. Thanks, my good friend. But since
'tis business

That brings me here, I must do some explaining.
I'll tell you how I came into this room.
'Twill make you smile. Firstly a question. If
I do remember, in the past these walls
Used not to serve such pretty purposes
As they now do ? This was not then the private
Apartment of a lady ?

DON RUY.

No, my lord.

It has been used so only very lately.

DON CARLOS. Since you became your cousin's guardian?

DON RUY. Only since then.

DON CARLOS. You chose this for the casket
Wherein by night to hide such loveliness
Till you'd the right to wear it at your pleasure.
I did not know it. Else I had not been here.
In former days this was a library.

Do you remember

The first time I was ever in this room?

Your smiling says you do. It was a trespass,
I entered uninvited like a thief—

And very like that thief of thieves—I mean

Your amorous monkey that climbs balconies,

And enters bedroom windows—for I used

That sort of stair myself to get in here.

Faith! I was playful then! A madcap prince,

That shunned life's prim-kept highways when he
could,

To sport amid its brakes. My only wisdom

Was like most women's, wisdom folly-born.

I had the sense when I was in a corner,

To trust to other heads to pull me out

Than what had got me in. I think it was

On some such business I was here that night?

To ask advice of you?

DON RUY.

It was, my lord.

DON CARLOS. It is a purpose similar brings me now

I wished to see you privately, and being,
As you do know, fond of a walk at night-time
About my cities, feeling so inclined
To-night, I set forth with this gentleman
To visit you. We found the house in darkness,
Save where one patch of light shone brightly forth
From a remembered window. With most men
Our youth dies hard. Some never lose it quite,
As I have not yet mine. For, seeing this light
I straightway crossed the courtyard to it, and
Bidding my 'tendant wait for me below,
Mounted the balcony and stepped in here.
Judge my surprise when the first thing I saw
Was yonder bed, and my discomfort when
A moment afterwards I found myself
Looking into a pair of startled eyes
And those eyes not a man's. Say, good duenna,
If thou wast not alarmed to see me here?

JOSEPHA. I was, my lord, most thoroughly alarmed.

DON CARLOS. All save her tongue seemed paralysed
with fear.

That, being a woman's, still had power to wag,
And pealed a loud alarum through the night
Enough to make the devil prick his ears,
Which brought in this sweet lady and her help.
What then to do but little choice was left me;
Either to scramble back the way I came
Or to disclose myself. I chose the latter;
And so turned fears to smiles. There is my story,
With this addition that, being in no hurry

To bid farewell so close on introduction
To the most lovely maid in Saragosse ;
And well aware that ere to-day old ladies,
Charged with the care of maidens have been known
To wink at Youth's contrivings—good duenna,
Think not when I say this I make reflection
Upon yourself, who, I am sure, would never
Fail in your duty—still, for appearance' sake,
And still more for the comfort of this lady,
I called my gentleman to join me here ;
And there's my tale complete. [*Rises.*] Now good de
Silva

Lead me to where we can together talk
For a brief while on what has brought me here.
You know that the imperial electors
That are to fill the throne of Germany,
Left vacant by the death of Maximilien,
With their selection, have agreed upon
Aix-la-Chapelle for their convention place.
I have an eye to this same throne myself,
And therefore must away to La Chapelle.
To lay my claim beside what France doth make
With that of Saxon Frederick. This will mean
I cannot as I did intend direct
The operations, for which all's now ready,
Against this band of outlaws who infest
Our northern provinces, and, I am told,
Are grown so bold that even in our towns
Do make encroachment. Therefore, in my stead,
You will assume command—not to expose

Yourself to risks o' the field ; but to instruct
 And be the brain that guides the expedition.
 On this we'll further speak. Lady, adieu.
 And for your entertainment many thanks.

[Clock strikes.

What! Is't so late? I think, my good de Silva,
I'd better ask you lodging for to-night,
And send my friend here home.

DON RUY. Your Majesty
Has but to ask it, and a thousand times
Swell the glad debt which I am in already
By this night's honouring.

DON CARLOS. Then I will stay.

[DON RUY bows low, then goes to door L.

DON RUY. Ho! there! Bring lights! Lights for
the King, my guest!

DONA SOL [*apart—to HERNANI*]. Until to-morrow
midnight fare thee well.

DON CARLOS [*aside*]. Love's ears are keen as are his whispers low.

"Until to-morrow midnight fare thee well."

[*He goes to HERNANI and speaks to him apart.*

Young man, to-night your king twice honoured you :
First when he touched your sword, then when he
screened you.

Will you be wise and listen to a warning?
When to a feast a king doth lend his presence,
And to the tables comes a loving-cup,

No other lips do drink till his have tasted,
Be careful that you cross me not again.

*[They eye each other for a moment in silence.
Then the KING turns. The curtains on the
left are drawn wide, and a number of the
Duke's retainers carrying torchlights file in,
and stand in a row with torches uplifted.]*

DON RUY. My love, give to his Majesty thy hand,
And guide him to my study.

[DONA SOL gives her hand to the KING.]

DON CARLOS. Thanks, gentle lady.

*[Exeunt all save HERNANI, who stands with
folded arms, looking in the direction they
have gone.]*

HERNANI. There was no road I might have trod
with honour,

Until to-night, except beyond revenge.

There was not one. For to have let stand in

Between mine oath and what it swore to do,

Seeing the cause of it, one single thought

That tended to an unenforced delay—

That were to prove myself a son indeed !

Nay—to have let my vengeance fall asleep

Were not to look a single inch beyond

Our life's uncertain edge. It would have been

To brand myself most selfish or most craven.

A thousand times deeper disgrace 'twould be

Than were I to allow unpunished

An enemy to injure me with insults—

Let him, unanswered, pluck my unsoiled plume

From off my cap and stamp it in the mud !
Not Love itself—that gentle love that drives
The greys of life away, and paints the world
A golden hue—coming into my life,
Had this one cloud the power to dissolve.
How is it then, when to the former cause
Another cause of equal weight and push
Doth add itself ? For now this selfsame love,
Which I have won, that man would take from me
'Gainst whom already I was fixed in hate.
This night has turned my love into a lash
That whips an unhealed wound. It is as fuel
Put on to glowing fire. As if I wanted
Reasons for hating thee, to-night, Don Carlos,
Thou givest me a hundred ! What am I ?
Dost call me thy attendant ? I will be so.
What thou did'st lightly call me, that I'll be.
I'll follow thee as keen as ever hound
Followed a blood-trail over wind-swept ground !
I'll follow thee till I have played my part,
And drawn this dagger, blood-wet, from thy heart !
[*He goes off by door at back.*]



ACT II

SCENE. *Outside the Palace. The side of the building is seen on the left. At the back is the town. On right, down stage, a big tree with a bench under it. Another seat centre.*

It is night. DON MATIAS, DON RODERIGO and DON SANCHE are discovered.

DON RODERIGO. Is this the window we're to stand and watch?

DON MATIAS. Nay, nay! Naught was said about standing. We were told to watch the window—no more. For my part, I'm not so big a fool as to stand one moment for a wench that can never be aught to me. For, mark you, if there be such a thing as loyalty in the land, this damsel is the king's sure property. The king has cast his eye upon her and pronounced her good. Therefore, we, being loyal subjects, 'tis not for us to let our feelings push us one inch in that direction, which, in the eye of the king, is a good direction. We must turn our noses elsewhere. Come, sit we down beneath this tree: and do thou, Roddie, being nearest the window, keep watch upon it. [*They sit.*]

DON SANCHE. What is the hour?

DON MATHIAS. Within an hour of midnight. I heard the clock strike as we came along.

DON SANCHE. Then we're too soon.

DON RODERIGO. Nay! 'Twas the king's wish we came early. Lovers' doings were never regulated by clock hands. Though the assignation be for midnight, 'twere well to anticipate a little. Tell me, good Matias, dost know the king's intention?

DON MATIAS. A quarter before midnight the king will himself lure forth the damsel. Then shall we bear her, willy-nilly, northwards to Arenco, where stands one of the king's summer-houses.

DON SANCHE. Does the king go with us?

DON MATIAS. He does so.

DON SANCHE. For what purpose?

DON MATIAS. For what purpose? Roderigo?

DON RODERIGO. Ay?

DON MATIAS. Sancho is asking me riddles. He asks me for what purpose the king goes with us to-night. Be sure, sweet Sancho, 'tis not to see thee and Roderigo to bed.

DON SANCHE. But I thought the king did desire this lady wed to the Duke de Silva?

DON MATIAS. Why, so he said. But many men there are who say their prayers and act otherwise. When all's said, a king's mortal with the worst of us.

DON RODERIGO. Ay: and the knees of the strongest will give under at times. Will't be ever so, think ye, Matias? Shall we never succeed in throwing off this sovereignty of the petticoat?

DON MATIAS. Why, there thou ask'st a question, Roderigo.

DON SANCHE. Answer it to the best of thee, and so keep me from sleep.

DON MATIAS. That will I. For our prime duty here is to watch, and 'tis the duty of each of us to keep the others to their duty. Therefore, to save thee, Sancho, from so far forgetting thy duty as to go to sleep, I will answer Roderigo at length.

DON RODERIGO. Nay, do not so, else shall we have Sancho going beyond the mere failure of his duty. We shall have him snoring. And that will be to warn the whole neighbourhood of our presence, and so betray the king's purpose. Let Sancho once get into his stride, and, by heaven, the watch will be down upon us to see what all the noise is about. 'Twere well, therefore, not to answer my question too lengthily. Now to it. Art thou awake, Sancho?

DON SANCHE. I can hear ye.

DON RODERIGO. Then, to thine answer, Matias.

DON MATIAS. My answer to thy question, Roderigo, is this: When there's no longer a fool left in the world, but all men are wise men, and women are all honest, then there'll be no more love-making.

DON RODERIGO. Why, 'tis a safe answer. How sayest thou, Sancho? Did'st hear it?

DON SANCHE. I heard it.

DON RODERIGO. Well, to it again, good Matias. Enlarge.

DON MATIAS. When all the world goes to hed

sober, and women cease to grow hair ; when boys are born without noses, and girls without mouths ; when we're all rewarded according to merit, and cockle-shells are rarer than rubies ; when lawyers cease sitting in the parliaments, and wax rich saying what they believe and not what they'd have other people—that is to say, when mice hunt tigers, and elephants run away from frogs—why, when these things come to pass there'll be no more love-making. • But so long ⑥ as men are the fools they are and believe a woman's words, so long will priests be kept busy.

DON RODERIGO. Thou art a dull dog, Matias. Were thy true nature not known to us, we should think, to hear thee speak, thou wast a woman-hater.

DON MATIAS. I a woman-hater ! Heaven save us ! Why, man, next to meat and wine I place woman second to none in the catalogue of things. They are the very cream of the earth's milking. Without 'em life would be as barren as a fig-tree that grew no figs—as a pea-pod with no pea in it. 'Twould be as slow as hunting for snails. As heaven's my witness, no woman-hater am I. I love the breed too well.

DON SANCHE. Why, then, did'st thou call men fools for being influenced ?

DON MATIAS. When I spake so, I did speak as a philosopher ; and your philosopher is the biggest fool of all. For he is sent to live upon a round earth, and passes his life deeply considering how best it can be made square. God save me from your wise man that never made a fool of himself ! And as to the

man who sees naught to admire in a woman's waist, and is content to go through life and see no more of her than what she shows o' Sundays on her way to church—why, I'd as soon be born a fish.

DON RODERIGO. Peace, peace! Here comes the king.

[*They rise.*]

DON CARLOS *enters*.

DON CARLOS [*calling softly*]. De Roxano?

DON MATIAS. Your Majesty?

DON CARLOS. Ah! [*Joins them under tree.*] What news?

DON MATIAS. Of the best, your Majesty, if, as the proverb hath it, none be good.

DON CARLOS. Have you seen nothing, then?

DON MATIAS. Nothing your Majesty does not. The lady has been most secret. The pink of modesty. Not so much as come to the window to sigh.

DON CARLOS. I trust you have been cautious?

DON MATIAS. As maggots in a hailstorm. No mortal thing has seen or heard us since we left the Palace.

DON RODERIGO. Would it not be well, your Majesty, now, while the way is clear, to call forth the lady?

DON CARLOS. Nay, good Roddie; we are too soon. Take care we act not hastily. Though Love expectant hath ever been quick to let Love in, too early a signal might wake suspicion.

DON SANCHE. What if the gentleman comes before he ought?

DON CARLOS. What then, my friend? We are four to one.

DON SANCHE. He may bring others.

DON CARLOS. Others?

DON SANCHE. By your Majesty's description of him this is no townsman. Gentlemen of the town do not carry hunting-horns at the belt.

DON CARLOS. His appearance was certainly not a townsman's. A mountaineer's rather—while, by his demeanour, no rank had been too high.

DON RODERIGO. Cannot your Majesty recall the name?

DON CARLOS. I had it a moment back on the tip of the tongue. 'Twas one of the few things the cupboard let me hear. Not a common name. Methinks it did end in i. Erni—

DON RODERIGO. Not Hernani?

DON CARLOS. That was the name. Hernani.

DON MATIAS. Hernani! Heaven help us! Quick! Quick! Look about! Look all ways at once! Up, down, to the right, to the left, in front, behind! Prick up every shrub, bush, thicket, in a mile. Look round every tree-bowl. Get we away from this one lest the villain be among its branches. 'Tis Hernani the outlaw. We are bird's-nesting for eagles' eggs. Look about there!

DON CARLOS. Is this the truth?

DON RODERIGO. 'Tis true, your Majesty, that the leader of these bandits bears the name Hernani.

DON CARLOS. Ha! Then if outlaw and lover be

one, the man is by this in our custody. Guards have been set at every entrance to the town with orders that none shall pass in unquestioned.

DON MATIAS. Why, then, the nest is ours. The cock-bird's in a trap. We can take his pretty hen-bird when we choose.

DON SANCHE. Make not too sure. Let us act as if, not one, but many were expected. Birds of prey oft work in company.

DON CARLOS. Good advice, Count—good advice.

DON RODERIGO [*aside to DON MATIAS*]. Count! He called Sancho Count!

DON SANCHE. Under what title does it please your majesty I shall be known as Count?

DON RODERIGO [*pulling him by the sleeve*]., It was a mistake, man—a mistake!

DON SANCHE. Your Majesty called me Count.

DON CARLOS. I did. It is a dark night. [DON SANCHE *bows*.] Well, well, I dropped the title. Since you have picked it up, wear it; and, for a first service, follow me now. You, Roddie, and you, De Roxano, stay on guard here. Come.

[*Exeunt DON CARLOS and DON SANCHE*.]

DON RODERIGO. Did'st know a title got easier than this?

DON MATIAS. I've known men to get 'em by asking.

DON RODERIGO. But to be ennobled by accident!

DON MATIAS. My friend, are we not all what we are by accident? Are not our whole lives built upon

an accident?—the accident of birth? Had our mothers conceived us one day sooner or one day later than they did, you and I might never have been born. They might have given birth to a pair of beings as different mentally and corporeally from what we are as one son is from another, got by the same parents. Nay, circumstances being not similar two moments together, 'tis possible they had never conceived at all. There's naught in our lives not accidental, unless you believe 'tis fated when a wench shall prick her thumb. As to this honour of Sancho's, we'll hope 'twill not discomfort him. For the wearing of uninherited honours is like the wearing of other-day clothes: only the cleverest actors can do it and not seem foolish. A lion's mane is very becoming to a lion. An ass would look fifty times an ass in one. Yet, despite the fact that not one in a million knows how to carry such things, how ready we all are to criticise the few that do. 'Tis an indication of a truly big nature in that man, who, himself dressed in shoddy, can say to one that wears silks and laces: "Well worn, my friend, thou dost carry thy splendours nobly!" 'Tis to stamp a man, whatever his station, as true-bred.

DON RODERIGO. There are not many such.

DON MATIAS. Nay: for this is a very mongrel age. I could name you men occupying high offices of state with as petty natures as any back-street cur's. For no better reason than that others have what they themselves have not, they'll yap and yap and show

their teeth, and call upon others of like small natures to join in their low-bred howlings. And there's cunning in it. For they know there is no ladder by which a man may so surely, so quickly, and so highly exalt himself as that of popular wanting. You've but to promise empty bellies that they shall be filled at others' expense, and they'll vote you, though you've done no more for 'em than lift the lid of the soup-bowl, into the highest places in the land. For myself, I have no patience with your noisy reformer who goes about telling every jackanapes below a certain degree that he ought to be something bigger than he is. I tell you, I would rather pick maggots from a dung-heap than touch the hand of one of those men who nourish envious bodies at the expense of the poor, professing to be their friends. The sun is not more distant from the earth than are the aims of true philanthropy from the barkings of such men. If you do know one of this kind, put this question to him next time you meet him. Say to him : "Who will try to earn a shilling knowing that sixpence shall be taken from him?" And if he gives you an answer bring it to me ; and then I will tell you whether the fellow is a madman or a knave.

[Window lights up.]

DON RODERIGO. Hush ! Look you there ! The window is lit up.

DON MATIAS. Ay : and a shadow passes o'er the blind.

Dids't thou not see it ? Faith, man, it is clear

We steal no bird of ordinary plumage.
For if the shade itself is beautiful,
What shall the substance be?

DON RODERIGO. Peace, peace. The king.

Re-enter DON CARLOS and DON SANCHE.

DON CARLOS. What light is this? Move very
cautiously.

*[They rejoin DON MATIAS and DON RODERIGO
under tree.]*

DON RODERIGO. The lady is astir, your Majesty.
Only this moment——

DON MATIAS. Pst ?

DON CARLOS. That was her shadow.
It must be close on midnight. Listen ! There !

[Chimes heard.]

It is the Pillar's deep-toned gongs that sound
Tolling the midnight hour. 'Tis time to act.
Go to the gates and see that all is ready.
I shall not need your help. Go quietly.

*[Exeunt DONS RODERIGO, MATIAS and SANCHE.
The KING remains under shadow of tree,
his eyes fixed on the lighted window.]*

DON CARLOS. The love that is not selfish is not
love.

The man who hangs his head in Beauty's face,
And coldly weighs another's rights to have
Against his own—that man is only fit

To work a goose-quill and to write of love ;
He is not worthy ever to enjoy it.
What thing is there more selfish than a child ?
The poet mind which formed a god of love
Remembered this, and, as in the belief
That since the day when from his magic sheath
The first of his winged shafts Love sped away,
He hath his arrows rained upon our hearts
That he might live in laughter—formed the god
As a young boy, a careless, laughing boy,
In typification of Love's selfishness.
If, then, the spirit who wakens love be selfish,
Shall not we all, his victims, be forgiven,
If we do err alike ? And in this case
I do but tender back the coin I'm given.
Denial can be selfish as desire.
I am denied, most selfishly denied !
If, in reply, I selfishly insist,
How do I wrong the lady more than she
Wrongs me ? I but oppose a selfish self
Against a self as selfish. Why she shrinks,
That is the thing doth fire me to assail.
I am no jot more careless of her feelings
Than she of mine. Then, if a man would say,
Hearing the case, the maid does naught amiss,
Then do I nothing either. That is logic.
As to my rival, what is he to me ?
Had he been friend I should have cause enough
To count him friend no more. But he's a bandit !
A pest, a vulgar cut-throat. If I leave him

To wed this maiden, he'll beget more bandits ;
Breed swarms of further dangers to the state.
Is it to wrong a murderer to hang him ?
Nay ; 'tis to do the state a proper service.
Then, certainly, I cannot wrong this man,
No matter what I do. That's surely logic.
Lastly the duke. Who likes to be reminded
Each hour of the day that he is old ?
Let the duke take this girl to be his wife,
And her warm chafing youth must so remind him.
Sure, if she had to choose between us two,
She'd have my love in preference to the duke's !
To keep her then from marriage with the duke,
By taking her myself, I do perform
A double kindness both on youth and age.
Is that not logic ?—flawless argument ?
Now with a conscience clear and unconcerned
I go to steal this fledgling from her nest,
And may good fortune 'tend me.

*[He goes to the door and knocks. Presently
window opens and DONA SOL comes on to
balcony.]*

DONA SOL. Hernani !

DON CARLOS *[aside]*. Shall I speak ?

[Pause. He knocks again.]

DONA SOL. He does not hear me.
I'll go to him.

*[She re-enters room. A moment later the door
opens and DONA SOL comes out. Instantly*

the KING seizes her in his arms and draws her away from door-way. A pause.

DON CARLOS. Now might I speak, had I the need to speak.

But where's there need, while my quick beating heart

Is held thus to thine own?

DONA SOL. O! Please release me!

DON CARLOS. Nay, be not cruel, love. Hear what it says.

Rest thus a moment, while my heart doth plead;

And let me hear the answer of thy own, [Pause

Dear, gentle heart.

DONA SOL [*struggling*]. I pray you loose me, sir.

DON CARLOS. I cannot, love. My arms are turned to steel:

Two metal hands which thou thyself hast locked,

And hast alone the key of. Speak a kind word—

But softly look!—O! give me but one smile—

And instantly my arms will lose their grip,

And be as gentle to thy gentle self

As is the snow unto the thing it rests on.

DONA SOL. Hernani! Help! Help me, Hernani, help!

DON CARLOS. Hush! You may waken help you do not seek!

You do not wish the duke to find you here?

DONA SOL. You mean you fear yourself to be found here.

DON CARLOS. Fear, gentle lady? How dost spell the word?

'Tis true I do not wish to be discovered;
For that would mean our tête-à-tête concluded.
What lovely lips! Ah! let mine meet them once.
[*She struggles.*

My God! Thou art not over courteous!
Wilt thou withhold from one who is thy king
Favours thou grantest to a bandit?

DONA SOL. Help!

DON CARLOS. Hush! I release you. Nay! but not to lose you.

Come, sit down here, and listen what I say.

DONA SOL. I do not wish to hear what you've to say.

DON CARLOS. O, to possess a bandit's winning way!
I must take lessons. Tell me, sweet, will you
Be my instructress—teach me how to woo,
When beauty's cold—like bold young bandits do?

DONA SOL. If I should give such lesson, I would first

Warn you to be careful that you did not sneer
At any by the lady woo'd held dear.

DON CARLOS. Most just rebuke; and quite abashed
I stand.

May I, repentant kneeling, kiss thy hand?

DONA SOL. If, sir, you ask this honestly—I mean
If you regret that you have roughly used me,
And thus would say so—why, then, here's my hand;
And heartily is everything forgiven. [Pause.

DON CARLOS. Listen to me! I love you. Nay—
but hear me!

DONA SOL. I cannot, sir. You know my love is plighted.

DON CARLOS. I know that you have pledged it to the duke.

DONA SOL. That is not true. I never pledged my love.

I only did consent to be his wife.

DON CARLOS. And do you still consent to be his wife?

DONA SOL. Ah ! would you chide me for disloyalty ?
Or think that since in this I'm proved untrue,
My love's a thing which need not be respected ?
The assent I gave was but a girl's assent :
The love I've promised is a woman's love.

DON CARLOS. And is such love immutable and fixed?

DONA SOL. My love is constant as the constant stars.

DON CARLOS. Why then thy love is an inconstant thing.

There is no star in all the heavens that's constant,
There's nothing constant anywhere, save God.
Transfer thy love, dear lady.

DONA SOL. So I will
When the inconstant stars transfer their spheres.
I pray you say no more.

DON CARLOS. I never thought
Such lips could be so cruel.

DONA SOL. Please to leave me.

DONA CARLOS. Leave thee! To what? Shall
kings make way

For bandits?

DONA SOL. Oh, sir, I pray you——

DON CARLOS. What! Shall I surrender

What I myself desire unto a robber?

Shall robber's arms hold what a king may not?

Ha! I forget. I doubt if these same arms

Will ever hold thee more.

DONA SOL. What do you mean?

DON CARLOS. I mean your lover is my prisoner.

DONA SOL. Your prisoner!

DON CARLOS. Ay, either that or else

Most undeserving of the name of lover.

DONA SOL. Your prisoner!

DON CARLOS. The midnight hour hath sounded.

If he has not been captured on the road,

Then read the love of each of us by this—

I come an hour before the appointed hour—

He hears the midnight chimes, and still is absent.

What value shall be set on that man's words,

Who says: "O! how I love the sun's bright rays!"

And lies a-bed until the afternoon?

DONA SOL. Hernani is your prisoner! What then?

DON CARLOS. Why, then he goes to prison.

DONA SOL. For how long?

DON CARLOS. O, not for long. His trial will be
short.

We'll quickly prove him guilty.

DONA SOL. Guilty of what?

DON CARLOS. Treason and other capital offences.
Too long this man hath menaced public safety.
'Tis time we had him.

DONA SOL. And—his trial over?

DON CARLOS. Why then— [*pauses*]

DONA SOL. You will not kill him?

DON CARLOS. Either that,
Or put him in a dungeon till he dies.

[*A long pause. DONA SOL stands in silence,
her face averted.*]

DON CARLOS. A little while ago I called him
"rival."

Who is my rival now?

DONA SOL [*quietly*]. You have a rival.
A rival before whom even kings must bend.
And unto him, if what you say be true,
I'll give myself more willingly than ever
Bride did to bridegroom on her bridal night.
Death cannot have a terror left for me,
When once Hernani's dead.

[*While she speaks HERNANI has silently entered.*]

HERNANI. He is not dead.

DONA SOL. Hernani! O! [*She goes to him.*]

HERNANI [*taking her in his arms.*] How now, my
gentle love!

Why weepest thou? Are these sad tears for me?
And have you, sir, in treachery called them forth,
Employing lies to aid you to prevail

Over a maid's resistance to your will?
Your cursed will! Ay! 'tis a cursed thing,
The thing you seek to do. Of all things vile
Few viler are there than to entice a maid
To her dishonourment. Within thy court,
Surrounding thee, are there not women enough
To be thy toys, thy playthings of an hour,
That thou must Tarquin-like steal through the
night,

To act the ravisher? Return to them!
They, to whom purity's a thing forgot,
Who think they are much honoured in thy choice,
E'en when they stand but servants to thy lust—
With hearts unmoved, and laughter in their eyes,
They'll pay thy passions far more generous toll
Than purity's enforcement ever can.

DON CARLOS. Robber, thy tongue has learnt much
from thy hand.

How true's the saying that of others' faults
Those most offend which in ourselves do live.

- ① Thy tongue is violent because thou find'st me
Doing a thing which thou thyself dost daily!
I but attempt a robbery, good robber!
Speaking of which, what is it brings thee here?
Is't not likewise to take what is not thine?
Two robbers bent upon the same fair booty,
We have surprised each other in the night.

HERNANI. I come to take what is but mine alone—
This lady's love.

DON CARLOS. You come to take the casket

Which doth contain that love! Well, so do I.
I really don't know what the duke would say,
If he should catch you taking it away.

HERNANI. If what I do my face had cause to
blush at,
With deeper colour should your own be dyed.
The wrong I do the duke is justified.
For so that is which does prevent a greater.
And what is more deserving of the name
Than marriage based not on a mutual love?
But you who lay rough hands upon this lady,
Not only do whatever wrong I do,
But most contemptible confess yourself,
Unless we value cowards. Ah! That word
Goes to your fingers. Nay, deny them not.
They do but itch to do the thing I'd have 'em.
I pray you draw, and let our swords decide
What words can never. [*Draws.*] Come! Dost
hesitate?

DON CARLOS. I do not fight with you.

HERNANI. Thou wilt not fight!
Why, then, in very truth, thou art a coward.

DON CARLOS. That's easily proved. Kings do not
fight with robbers.

When yesternight I did cross swords with you,
I did it knowing not with whom I fought.

HERNANI. And now thou knowest, art thou so
afraid?

DON CARLOS. Now that I know, I will not con-
descend.

HERNANI. That is a word which proves you do not know.

DON CARLOS. I am your king; and so I do not fight.

As to your insult, thus I answer it.

[*Turns his back to* HERNANI. *Pause—*

HERNANI *plays with the handle of dagger.*

HERNANI. Begone! That is my answer to your own.

[*The KING turns again, and the two eye each other for a moment in silence.*

DON CARLOS. Lady, farewell. [*To* HERNANI] Sir, we may meet again.

If, when we do, your life is in my hands,

I warn you look for neither grace nor mercy.

[*He goes out.*

DONA SOL. Come! Let us fly!

HERNANI. Ah! Had we but the power.

DONA SOL. What dost thou mean?

HERNANI. The power, love, to fly.

That, like the strong-winged eagle, I might lift thee

Within these arms and bear thee hence away—

Bear thee, my loved one, far above the earth

Over the valleys to my mountain home.

But on that lower road that we must take,

Each yard is hedged with dangers and delay.

DONA SOL. Dangers are made for love to prove itself,

And love delayed is like a loan renewed,

When more must then be given and received.

And in love-debts those who contract them stand
Both creditor and debtor of the other.

Dangers I do not fear; and much delay,
When shared, is less than much less is alone.

HERNANI. The king knows who I am. After
to-night—

Thou heard'st his words—his frown will be upon me.
His preparations will be hurried on;
And in a few short hours war's thunder peal
May shout above us, and its lightning strokes
Rive us apart, or shatter us in death.
Fortune oft turns her wheel thus mockingly:
Leads us one moment into happy gains,
To rob us in the next.

DONA SOL. So let her turn it.

In such an order I would be her toy.
I do not value life by wealth of years,
But by the wealth of joy which Life doth give;
And some there are are given in an hour
As much as aged eyes look back upon.
O! rather would I live for one such hour—
Taste so great joy in a so little space—
Than have it spread over a length of years,
To drain my cup by dribblets. Come, my love,
To-night at least is ours; and if to-morrow
The hand of Fate shall turn the final leaf
Of our life's story we at least can say
We lived this night together. Why dost stay?
I almost told my heart-beats o'er to-day.
So anxious was I for the night to come

That all the glories of a golden day
Passed by me unobserved. I but remember
The sun did shine from the fresh morn till eve,
And that a light wind stirred among the flowers
And sometimes touched my cheeks. But it was
 shadows,

Those of the sombre cypress, lengthening eastwards,
Foretelling night's approach, that I did watch.

Is it unmaidenly to speak like this?

Wilt think such longing shows my love to be
A narrow thing? Dear love, I scarce do know
How much thought of myself is in my love.

More that I shall be had than I shall have—

O! more than to be loved that I may love thee—

To tell thee in those midnight hours of darkness,

When everything is silent and the earth

Noiselessly wheels its star-lit way to God,

The deep, full story of my woman's heart—

This, this it was so made me long for night!

O! these weak arms shall be for thee a refuge,

Yielding a store of comfort and delight;

And thou shalt be its master, privileged

To enter when thou wilt.

HERNANI.

Dear saints in heaven!

What shall I say?

DONA SOL.

Nay, do not wait to say:

But take me hence that I my words may prove.

HERNANI. Dear love, I cannot take thee hence
 to-night.

DONA SOL. Hernani!

HERNANI. Hush!

DONA SOL. But thou did'st promise me!

HERNANI. Thee not a half of what I pledged myself.

For me there was a promise in that promise
Dearer than all things else, whose sweet fulfilment
I'd strive toward, though every step between me
Did hold a risk of death. But shall I risk
Thy life whereon all happiness depends?

DONA SOL. But on thine own all happiness
depends!

Thou'lt risk thy life without one thought for me;
And mine thou wilt not, all for thought of me!

HERNANI. Dear sweet! Nay, listen, love. Outside
the city

Ambushes lie awaiting my return.

They fell upon us as we came along;

And—hark—what was that?

DONA SOL. I did not hear a noise.

HERNANI. Like distant shouting borne upon the
wind. [*Horse neighs.*

My horse's neigh! [*another*] And there one answers him.
Either he heard my voice or scents some danger.

[*Pause. Clock strikes. It is followed by distant cries.*

There! Dost thou hear it? Shouting afar off.

DONA SOL. O! look, Hernani! Saragossa lights!

[*The town begins to light up. Alarum bell heard.*

The town is being woken from its sleep.

Enter a MOUNTAINEER.

MOUNTAINEER. Quickly, my lord! Our entry is discovered!

HERNANI. Go on without me! Make for the western road!

I'll follow close upon you! If a guard
Is stationed that way also, break it down!
I'll join you by the river.

[Exit MOUNTAINEER.]

DONA SOL. Do not go!

HERNANI. I must. Good-bye.

DONA SOL. O! do not leave me here

HERNANI. I leave thee only for a little while.

Thou wilt be true to me? Give me a kiss.

[She raises her face to his, and their lips meet in a long kiss. There is a pause, while each looks fondly into the face of the other. Then he turns away and goes off quickly. DONA SOL falls upon seat.]

ACT III

SCENE. *A room in the Chateau de Silva, a few leagues from Saragossa. Terrace and gardens at back.*

Present the duke's STEWARD, a PAGE and a JESTER.]

STEWARD [*to PAGE.*] Boy, take this box to her ladyship's room. 'Tis from the duke, thy master.

PAGE. If this be not a bauble-box, may I be hung with one of her ladyship's garters!

STEWARD. Hung with— Tut, tut! What next, boy! This is the duke's bridal gift, made to the Dona Sol de Silva who to-day becomes his wife. Open not the lid if you value your sight. There are stones of such water beneath it as might bring water to the mouth of an empress.

PAGE. Shall any message be given with the box?

STEWARD. There was a message—a very pretty message—most daintily worded. I had it from the duke himself.

PAGE. Shall I take that also?

STEWARD. Nay, I've forgotten it.

PAGE. Why, then—happen what may, the duke's gift cannot be delivered worse than his message.

[*Exit PAGE.*]

JESTER. Ha!

STEWARD. How now, fool! What dost thou here?

JESTER. I think, good Master Steward—I think.

STEWARD. Think! I did not know fools thought.

JESTER. Then thou dost confess thyself a fool indeed : for 'tis only fools who do think. When did thinking make the heart glad? To be blessed with a merry heart is to have thy bread buttered all the days of thy life. Therefore he who makes a practice of thinking butters not his bread : and such a man is most surely a fool.

STEWARD. By this argument, men being the deeper thinkers, are greater fools than women?

JESTER. Thou shalt answer that question thyself. Tell me now, which is the more foolish—he who fishes, or he who is fished?

STEWARD. Why, he who is fished. For 'tis folly to swallow a hook to gain a maggot.

JESTER. There thou sayest truly, and so answerest thyself.

STEWARD. How do I answer myself?

JESTER. How? Thou art simple indeed not to see that! The woman was never born that let herself be fished; while the man that was not fished never lived to wear breeches. When a man says: "I have won this woman to be my wife!"—he shows himself a fool indeed: for if the matter were put truly, he would say: "I have been won by this woman to be her husband!" Of all silly fish under the sun there's none sillier than a man. A pretty woman has but to droop an eyelid at him, or show him her ankle, and his gills

are through the mesh before there's time to say "woman," which, as everybody knows stands for "Woa! man!"

STEWARD. I fear thou art a hopeless fool.

Enter PAGE.

JESTER. Boy, come here! Tell me: why was woman given forefinger and thumb?

PAGE. How should I know?

JESTER. There, now! He has seen women's forefingers and thumbs since the day he first saw his mother's, yet cannot tell what they were given 'em for.

PAGE. Women thread needles with forefinger and thumb.

JESTER. A very poor answer, which showeth thou hast not read thy scriptures closely. What use had Adam's wife for a needle, and she was the pattern all women were copied from.

PAGE. Forefinger and thumb are useful to women for putting food into the mouth.

JESTER. A better answer; yet not a good one. For 'tis a silly pig that cannot munch acorns without forefinger and thumb. Nay, shall I tell thee for what reason before all others women were given forefinger and thumb? Turn thy head away. [PAGE *turns.*] In the first place, a woman was given forefinger and thumb, that when her husband pleased her she might stroke him on the nose—thus. And in the second, that when he displeased her she might catch him by the ear—thus.

[*Pulls PAGE's ear.*]

PAGE. O!

JESTER. Ha, ha, ha! Did'st hear him, Master Steward. He said "O!" [PAGE goes out rubbing his ear.] What time is the wedding to be?

STEWARD. Within an hour.

JESTER. And the feasting?

STEWARD. Soon after.

JESTER. Shall I sing thee my latest musical-rhythmical-rhymical composition?

STEWARD. Is it long?

JESTER. No more than a few feet. Be not too severe on the wording of it. Rhyme has ever been the enemy of sense; and many a man has been forced by his rhyme to say much that he never would have said but for it. Here goes.

Maids there are of every sort,
Handsome, plain and pretty.
Every taste may find its sport—
Proud, demure or witty.
Maiden sprightly, maiden slow—
Short as well as long one—
But wherever daisies grow,
There's no maid like a young one!

Men there are of every kind,
Clever, dull, conceited;
A full list no mortal mind
Ever yet completed.

But of all who beards do grow,
Be it young or grey one—
Wheresoever poppies blow,
There's no man like a gay one!

Fools there are of every sort,
Simple, educated ;
In as well as out of court,
Single fools and mated.
Light and heavy, nimble, slow ;
Hot as well as cold one—
But wherever thistles grow,
There's no fool like an old one!

STEWARD. And is this to be sung to the duke?

JESTER. Will it give offence, think ye?

STEWARD. Why, the duke's an old fool if it does not.

JESTER. Then answer me; Why is folly like a
lady's stocking?

STEWARD. Nay, I know not.

JESTER. 'Tis like a lady's stocking for this reason,
that there's a limit to the height it may go.

STEWARD. Tut, tut!

[*Exit.*

[JESTER *strums instrument.*

Enter JOSEPHA.

JOSEPHA. Fool, where is my young mistress?

JESTER. In Spain, unless my eyes deceive me.
Yonder she comes. I'll to the kitchen to smell how
the pastries are doing. [*He goes out.*

JOSEPHA. She comes not with Love's careless steps;
but slow,

As might befit the cloister—head downcast,
Like a fair flower stricken in its flush,
And dropping to its death. My tender mistress!
Where is the lifted chin, the happy eye,
That should bespeak thy bridal? Many a lass,
Nurtured beneath the thatched roof of a cottage,
To-day will be thy richer. Not in beauty,
Nor in the least of maiden attributes;
But richer in the happiness thats beats
Under her simple frock. Peace, peace, old tongue.

Enter DONA SOL.

DONA SOL. What is the hour, Josepha?

JOSEPHA. Nearing mid-day.

I was about to seek your ladyship.

DONA SOL. I never thought I'd live to hate that
word.

JOSEPHA. What word, dear lady?

DONA SOL. Mid-day—yet I do.

JOSEPHA. Your robes are all prepared. Come,
shall we go?

DONA SOL. O! Would you haste me into my cold
shroud?

JOSEPHA. Your shroud! Ah, madam! that's a
hateful word!

DONA SOL. To me not half so as another is.
A loathed marriage-bed to one who has loved—
Why!—that's far worse than death! Shall I allow
A thing preventable to be, that I dread more
Than what is bound to be?

JOSEPHA. These are wrong thoughts.

DONA SOL. Wrong thoughts ?

JOSEPHA. Not a brave girl's.

DONA SOL. You mean a
coward's.

I know I'm a coward in many things.

Had I not been so, I should have not feared

In the beginning, nor would even now,

To tell the duke I have no love for him.

JOSEPHA. Are you afraid then ?

DONA SOL. Yes, I am afraid.

JOSEPHA. What do you fear ?

DONA SOL. I fear the duke himself.

JOSEPHA. You used not so to fear him.

DONA SOL. Not until

Love entered me. Ever since then I have.

JOSEPHA. The duke has always been most kind
to you.

DONA SOL. I know he has.

JOSEPHA. And I am sure would be
As kind a husband as a guardian.

DONA SOL. I doubt it not. Yet do I shrink from
him.

I dread him kind far worse than I would cruel ;

I dread his smile more than I would his frown.

I dread things in his eyes I never saw

Until love came to me.

JOSEPHA. What if that love

Which has so metamorphosed you is wasted ?

I mean if he to whom you gave your love

Has cast it to the winds. Your lover has not
Spoken now many days. Impressionable
Youth must, because he is so, e'er be fickle.
I'd rather have the even love of age
Than taste Youth's plenty for a little while,
And then be left to starve.

DONA SOL. How dare you speak so !

JOSEPHA. Listen—

DONA SOL. I say how dare you! What!
my nurse!

Whom in my youthful loneliness I chose
To be my confidante—to whom I've bared
My heart as openly as, night and morning,
Ever since childhood I have bared my limbs
Without a thought of shame— What! is it she
Who would persuade me to a hateful marriage
By planting in me doubts of him I love?
Why, then there's no one left upon the earth,
No, not a soul in all the wide wide world,
That I may turn to in my misery. [*She weeps.*]

JOSEPHA. Hush, hush! There—lay your head upon
my breast.

The pillow where so oft in years gone by
Your little body lay in happy sleep.
My lovely child—the joy of my old age—
Whom I have watched since first thy baby eyes
Looked out in pretty wonder on the world.

DONA SOL. O, nurse, look in those eyes, and see
what tears
Are welling from my heart. What have I done—

What fault committed in my so short life,
To be so punished?

[*A pause. Then distant firing heard.*

JOSEPHA. Hark! What was that?

[*Another volley.*

There! There again! The crack of musketry
Ringing across the valley. This must be
What I heard several speak of yesterday:
The king's attack upon this band of outlaws,
Which has for so long now molested us.

DONA SOL. What do you say?

[*Another volley heard.*

JOSEPHA. Another volley! Listen!

[*More firing, then distant cries.*

Shouting afar—[*Bugle heard.*] And there's a bugle-
call.

Good heavens, child! What ghost is it you see,
That turns your face this epileptic hue?

DONA SOL. Josepha!

JOSEPHA. Well?

DONA SOL. My lover's over there!

JOSEPHA. Your lover? Where?

DONA SOL. Across the valley yonder.

JOSEPHA. What do you mean? How know you
such a thing?

Have you a prey-bird's sight that you say this?

Can't see a pebble at a thousand yards?

A grass-blade at a mile? I see nothing

But distant trees and thinning wisps of smoke.

DONA SOL. I never told you who my lover was.

JOSEPHA. Why, neither did you. Who, then, is your lover?

DONA SOL. He is the leader of yon outlaw band.
And O! who knows but that some cruel shot
Has lodged its leaden weight within his heart;
And that those eyes I loved so, see no more—
That his dear hands are coldly clenched in death!

JOSEPHA. Be careful what you say. Here comes the duke.

And, see, already he is dressed for chapel,
He will be vexed to find you unprepared.

DONA SOL. He will be something more ere he's much older.
He'll find me far from amorous to-night.
As cold a bride as groom e'er looked upon.
I warrant you he'll not disturb my sleep.

Enter the DUKE.

DON RUY. My love! How's this? You are not dressed for church?

DONA SOL. I ask your pardon, sir. I'll go at once.

DON RUY. Your cheeks are very pale, child. Are you well?

DONA SOL. I'm very well, my lord. Come, Josepha.

[Exit with JOSEPHA.]

DON RUY. Pale on her wedding-day! What should that mean?

If it were love's fine pallor, that with beauty
Equal to hers, and kings might envy me.

But age wakes not in woman that sweet longing
Which turns its subject faint. That is alone
Fresh youth's capacity. I'd be a fool
To flatter myself so. What is it then?
She has much changed of late. I have observed it.
She droops her eyelids coldly as a nun,
Whenever I approach her. It's so long,
That I forget when last she smiled on me.
And then this present pallor. If these signs
Stand for affection's death—as I would have it—
Then comes a hateful thought. What she had given
She'd now withhold because another asks it.
Woman's inconstancy never arose
Out of herself. Yet, what's my ground for this?
Whom hath she seen of late? What other eyes
Have looked in hers to rob me of her love?
There was that night when I discovered her
So strangely with the king. And I remember
Alarm was on her face when she beheld me.
Yet, if it were the king—

Enter PAGE

Well? What is it?

PAGE. My lord, there is a stranger from Armillas,
A holy man, a friar mendicant,
Who craves a few hours' hospitality.

DON RUY. 'Tis given freely. Say so. Bid him
welcome.

One moment. He perhaps bears later news
Down from the hills—knows how the battle's gone.

PAGE. 'Tis said, my lord, the king has won the day.

The main fight ended two full hours ago.

DON RUY. Why that's good news indeed.

PAGE. Further report

Declares the band destroyed, all save a few,

Who fled in this direction close pursued.

DON RUY. What of its chief, the man they call
Hernani?

PAGE. First rumour said that he was early slain
Leading a fierce assault upon the king ;
But I be doubtful if there's truth in this :
For very recently there came the news
That a rewardment of a thousand crowns
Is offered for his head.

DON RUY. What says the friar ?

PAGE. He did not speak of this.

DON RUY. Bring him to me.

I'll question him myself. If he has come
Along the Armillas road, he must have been
Close to the fighting. Bring him to me here.

[Exit PAGE.]

What says the proverb ? " He who opes his door
Unto the stranger lets good fortune in."

I wonder if event has proved it true,
When its accepted truth has been the cause
That makes the stranger welcome ? Not that I
Have ever shut my doors on misery ;
But I would give to all the world to-day,
Though such a giving gave it all I had,

If in return heaven would give to me
The one thing I desire.

*Re-enter PAGE, showing in HERNANI, who is
disguised in a friar's hooded cloak.*

[Exit PAGE.]

HERNANI. Peace and good fortune
Unto the Duke Pastrana.

DON RUY. Thanks. To you
Peace and good fortune also. You are welcome
Most heartily. I pray you seat yourself.

[They sit.]

One tells me you have journey'd from Armillas.

HERNANI. I have, my lord.

DON RUY. That way you must have passed
Close by the fighting?

HERNANI. Very close, my lord.
More than one bullet whistled past my head.
'Twas sometimes just as if men aimed at it,
So near the bullets passed me.

DON RUY. And the fight
What was the issue?

HERNANI. Not a happy one.

DON RUY. Not happy? But I thought——

HERNANI. Not for Hernani.

DON RUY. Ha! You know the villain's name!

HERNANI. My lord,
It is a household word. A thousand crowns
Have made it so. I never should have thought

A sum so small as this had power to make
A man so widely known. The king has offered
A thousand crowns to any one who shall
Procure Hernani for him. So the country
Has left its gossip-bowl, its easy chair,
The plough, the harrows, and the lumbering wain
And armed with sporting guns, with bows and
arrows,

With pistols, pitch-forks, mattock-axe and spade,
With anything to bore a hole in him,
Or crack him on the head—just like a pack
Of hounds they run about with noses down
Scenting the passage of this golden quarry.
He'll have to look about if he'd escape them.
Noses are very cunning in the country.
I wouldn't give a sixpence for his chance
Of gaining the retirement of a town.

DON RUY. Where are you journeying toward, my
friend?

HERNANI. To Saragossa, sir—there to fulfil
A vow but lately made unto a saint.
I ask a few hours rest and nourishment,
To help me on my way.

DON RUY. Only your will
Shall put a limit to your welcome here.
What is your name?

HERNANI [*hesitating*]. My name?

DON RUY. You need not tell it,
If you wish not to. Should my servants ask it,
'Twill be enough to say you are—my guest.

Enter DONA SOL in her bridal robes.

[Behind her are JOSEPHA, women attendants, pages and retainers.]

DON RUY. But wish me joy, good friar. See who comes.

This is my wedding-day, and here's my lady.

[Takes DONA SOL's hand]

Have you within your pilgrim wanderings
Seen of earth's beauties anything more fair?
If you say "yes," I'll not believe you, sir;
For here's the sweet perfection of a maid.

[Kisses hand. Pause.]

HERNANI. Who wishes here to gain a thousand
crowns?

[General astonishment.]

A thousand crowns! Who here would earn that
sum?

DON RUY. What do you mean, my friend?

HERNANI. I mean, my lord,

My head has had that value put upon it.

I am no holy man; no friar, I:

I am Hernani!

[Casts from him his friar's robe, and stands forth in the garb of a mountaineer.]

What! does no one move?

In truth, my lord, you're fortunate in your servants.

A thousand crowns is not a little sum.

Will no one have it? Must I go outside,
And call my own Tay-ho! across the country?

DON RUY. Is this a madman I have welcomed
here?

DONA SOL [*aside*]. Nurse, nurse, what must I do?

JOSEPHA. Speak not a word!

I will contrive you something in a moment.

HERNANI [*to retainer*]. Young man, I like your
face. This sum of money,

Could buy you many things—your independence,
Pleasures innumerable—a woman's love.

You hear?—a woman's love. Are you in love?
You should be with your lips and with your eyes.
Perhaps the lady's cold. Tut, tut! This money
Will have the means to make her warm enough.

There's few, but gold can make a weathercock
Of their affections—point them anywhere.

Put gold in women's palms, and you will find them
Wonders of sweet attention. So—away!

Hunt for the hunters; and, when you have found
them,

Tell them the place where they may cease their
search.

DON RUY. Let no man stir!

HERNANI.

My lord—

DON RUY.

If any moves,

By God, that man shall answer with his life!

Sir, you offend me when you ask my servants
The thing you do. The first mark of a gentleman
Is to respect his word. What I have promised

Think you I now retract? I called you "guest"—
Assured you shelter. Ignorance of whom
A pledge is made to cannot justify
The going back on it. You are secure
From capture while you stay beneath my roof.

HERNANI. My lord, I thank you deeply, very
deeply

I thank you, even though occasion,
Kindness's valuant, has made of yours
One that is profitless. So, I'll say "farewell."

DON RUY. One moment, sir. This conduct's strange
indeed.

From safe disguise you have unmasked yourself,
Without apparent cause. Why have you done
this?

What is it has made you with a wide pursuit
Still ringing in your ears—a hunted man—
Protectedly disguised, declare yourself?

Why would you now

Do what no hunted animal will do?

Break from a friendly cover, unsuspected,

And end your own pursuit?

HERNANI. My lord, the sight
Of yonder lady is the cause of my
Indifference to capture.

DON RUY. Why?—How's that?
Do you then know this lady?

HERNANI. No, my lord:
For, if I did, then should I know a woman;
And that would be to rank myself more wise

Than Solomon himself. Yet once I fancied
Such wisdom mine. I thought a woman loved me,
Whom I did love. Yes: in her eyes I thought
She let me read her spirit. This lady, sir,
Strangely resembles her. Indeed, she's like
Externally, as any pair of parts
That go to form herself are like each other.
I pray the likeness ends there for your sake.
For, underneath the fair exterior
Of her I loved, there worked a heart most cunning.
Cunning? How many times that heart has beat
Against my own, as if in ecstasy
At being held so—influencing lips
And eyes, a quartette of conspirators
Most powerful indeed, to join with it
In tricking me into a false belief
That she, their mistress, loved me. Lies, all lies!
Smiles, whispers, sighings, pressures—all, all lies.
And promises of no more substance than
The breath that made them. She has given herself
Unto another—soon will be his wife;
And I—my lord, it may be some could bear
My misery and live; steeling themselves
With reason to endure it. But, for me
Reason is powerless. I cannot live—
This lady teaches me—to be reminded
Of all that faithlessness has robbed me of.
I do not care how soon my life is ended,
Since to all happiness I have said farewell.

DON RUY. Well, I'll not be the instrument to end it.

I'll not go back upon my given word.]
Though you are what you are, and though it is
The king who seeks you, I will not betray you.
Do as you please. You're safe beneath my shelter.

Enter PAGE.

PAGE. My lord, a mighty army lies in view
Across the valley. A small part of it
Has left the rest, and now makes its descent
In this direction straight toward the ford.
The watchman in the look-out with his glass
Declares the king is one of this detachment ;
And, as their purpose seems directed here,
Sent me to give your lordship news of it.

DON RUY. How far from the ford are they ?

PAGE. Some distance, yet.

DON RUY. My love, return to your room. Sir—in
a moment

I'll be with you again. I go to see
If what's reported's true. While I am gone,
Make up your mind, in th'event of its being so,
The course you wish to take.

[Exit DON RUY and his retainers.]

JOSEPHA *[to DONA SOL]*. Now is your chance.
Speak your few words ; then follow quickly after.
Take care you stay not long. Act not as if
The steps of the watch-tower took an hour to climb.
Come with me all.

*[Attendants follow JOSEPHA off. DONA SOL
stays behind.]*

DONA SOL [*quietly*]. Hernani?

HERNANI.

Ha! Who speaks?

Did you address me, madam?

DONA SOL.

Speak to me.

HERNANI. Why—so I will.

[*He turns to her and, his eyes refusing to meet hers, addresses her first mockingly, then passionately. DONA SOL stands facing him, motionless.*]

What dress is this you wear
That droops its lovely folds upon the ground
So modestly about you? What means this wealth
Of sea-stolen treasure lying on your breast
Amid this blaze of diamonds? Why have you thus
Sprinkled your hair with flowers? And on your
brow

Why do you wear this costly diadem?
What hour is it? Midnight? Nay, 'tis mid-day.
It is the sun that lights these splendours up.
Then, 'tis not for the ballroom you are dressed:
Unless now mid-day dances are the fashion.
So long 'tis since I mingled with the world
I am not sure of things. Is't for a dance
You are thus rarely decked? Will you not speak?
Are you afraid to say with your own lips
What has been said already? Then you are conscious
Of your deep wickedness—your silence says it—
And there's no blame that I, whom you have wronged,
Can lay upon you that you may resent.
Was this the price?—and this—and this—and this,

For which you sold yourself? What do you give
Besides your body in return? What else?
Say you give but the finger-tips of love—
The warmth of one poor spark of it—say but this,
And I'll not call you worse than common bad.
But if you cannot say so, there's no name
In all sin's catalogue that's vile enough
To call you by. Then you are one of those
Who think a few words mumbled by a priest,
A moment's kneeling in a holy place,
Can sanction harlotry! What other word
Is there for it, when woman sells herself?
However she may stand in others' eyes,
For whom convention marks the Right and Wrong,
Shall she stand higher in the eyes of Heaven,
Which look beyond convention to the Truth—
Nay, shall she stand as high in that great Judgment,
Who sells herself for some luxurious gain,
As the low wretch that traffics in the night
Upon the city pavement, offering
Her sin-smirched body in return for bread?

[Suddenly his eyes meet hers, and he throws himself at her feet.]

Mercy! Ah, God! What have I said? Mercy!

[There is a long silence. Then DONA SOL stoops and lays her hand very tenderly on his head.]

DONA SOL. Dearest!

HERNANI. Ah! not that word! My right to it
Is forfeited for ever.

DONA SOL. Never one
Shall tell as truly what thou art to me.
Dearer than all things else since first we met,
To me thou wilt be dearest till the end.

HERNANI. What can I say? Shame will not let me
speak.

I plucked the fairest flower of the garden
And crushed it in my hand.

DONA SOL. Ah, speak not so.

HERNANI. I struck a woman's heart!—a heart that
loved me.

The wound I made showed bleeding in her eyes.
How can I look into those eyes again?

DONA SOL. Look in them now. Hernani, lift thy
face. [*He looks up.*
See thy mistake: no wound is in my heart.

[*He rises and takes her in his arms.*

HERNANI. O! is there anything in the wide world
So sweet as woman's patience where she loves?
I'll kiss these lips, thy heart's kind messengers,
As I would kiss two pardoners sent from Heaven.
Dear lips, accept this penitent's true kiss,
And carry it to the kind heart you serve.

[*They kiss.*

I never thought to hold thee thus again.

DONA SOL. Alas! Thou'lt never hold me so no
more.

HERNANI. What dost thou mean?

DONA SOL. I mean, dear, that to-night—
How can I say the word?—How can I let
Its poison in thy ear? Hast thou forgot
The meaning of these robes and what I am?
Which as my bridegroom would'st thou have to share
My bed with me to-night? Shall I be held
Within the passionate arms of one that I
Shrink from by day?—or shall it be dark Death
Who kisses me to sleep? O! my Hernani!
Hadst thou but been less fearful for my safety,
And taken me away that night we parted,
Though that had brought me now where I now stand—
Near to my death—I should have been content.
For I had tasted then life's topmost joy;
And who that has so tasted should lament
The aftermath denied him? But to go hence
From life with a sad longing in the heart.

HERNANI. Peace, peace, my love. O, from thy
 mind dismiss
These dark alternatives, each one of which
Balancing to an equal weight of sin,
Alike must anger Heaven. I will seek out
The holy man I once spoke of to thee.
His dwelling, a rude cave, is not far off.
I'll beg his aid to shelter thee awhile.
Disguise thyself, and, so soon as thou canst
With safety do it, make for the river where
A mile away a stone bridge crosses it.
Dost know the place? The bridge between the
 woods.

DONA SOL [*in a whisper*]. Hernani!

HERNANI.

Yes?

DONA SOL.

A hand was on the curtain!

I saw a hand! Some one is hidden there.

[*They look in silence towards curtain. Then*

DONA SOL *slips quietly out.*

[*After a further silence DON RUY comes from behind curtain. He walks up to HERNANI, and the two men stand looking into each other's eyes.*

DON RUY. Speak! Speak quickly! In a moment
now

The king will rap his hilt upon my door.

What reason have I now to stand between you?

Say why I should not now unsheathe my sword,

And holding it thus, give orders to my servants

To tell the king the traitor that he seeks

Is here! Traitor! The word's too good.

Where is the name

Can fit so base a nature as the man's

Who strikes a hand that serves him?

There is not one! The lowest animal—

The coldest, spawn-got thing—the slimy serpent,

Venomed by nature—the icy-bellied frog—

The vilest thing that creeps—has in its nature

Sufficiency of goodness to respect

One that has done it kindness. O! vilest craft!

That, welcomed by another to his hearth,

Uses his hands to rob him.

HERNANI. Hear me a moment

DON RUY. I ask to hear thee. Speak!

HERNANI. This is my sin.

I have these many days loved where you love.

DON RUY. These many days! Ha! Now I remember!

We do not meet for the first time to-day.

Thy dark face is familiar. Thou art the man

Companioned the king that night I—

Hell and fury!—

Then it was not the king, but—answer me!

That night—the night I speak of—

What was it took thee to my cousin's bedroom?

HERNANI. 'Twas love that took me there.

DON RUY. Interpret that!

HERNANI. Interpret it?

DON RUY. Your answer's not enough!

HERNANI. How? Not enough?

DON RUY. Your answer's not enough!

HERNANI. What do you mean?

DON RUY. Robber! What should I mean!

HERNANI. By God! Thou liest!

[Long pause, during which they face each other with gleaming eyes.]

DON RUY. Well—that is well for thee.

This sword had else not uselessly been drawn.

Enter a SERVANT.

DON RUY. What is thy news?

SERVANT. The king, my lord, is entered in the courtyard.

DON RUY. Attend a moment. Be within call.

[*Exit* SERVANT.]

DON RUY. Listen to me. You have wronged me so deeply that nothing I did could exceed your deserving. Still—I'll offer you one alternative against capture by the king. You shall yourself decide whether I surrender you or still protect you.

HERNANI. What do you ask?

DON RUY. Your life.

HERNANI. My life? Most fair alternative! You will save me from death at the hands of the king on condition that I yield you my life?

DON RUY. That you yield it when I demand it.

HERNANI. Ah! When you demand it.

DON RUY. When I demand it. That's the alternative. Choose.

HERNANI. Goes my liberty with this?

DON RUY. It does.

HERNANI. I shall be as free as before, on this condition?

DON RUY. You shall.

HERNANI. For several days perhaps?

DON RUY. Perhaps for ever.

HERNANI [*after a pause*]. I consent.

DON RUY. To consent is not enough.

HERNANI. I give my word.

DON RUY [*with a faint smile*]. Your word.

HERNANI. The word of a Spanish nobleman.

DON RUY [*incredulously*]. Ha?

HERNANI. Old man, I read nobility on your brow.

Are your eyes got so blind you cannot see
That word is written here?

[*Points to his own brow.*]

Look I the product of a peasant's love?
Sir—the red blood that courses in my veins
Might mingle with a queen's and lessen not
One purple drop a shade. Spain's noblest sons—
The noblest and the best of her fair daughters—
Are represented here. I give my word.

DON RUY. It is enough. You give what a Spanish
nobleman

Does not betray. I ask no surer bond.
You will the moment that I ask your life
Surrender it to me?

HERNANI. I will.

DON RUY. The moment it is asked?

HERNANI. That very moment.
[*They bow.*]

DON RUY. Come here!

[*He goes up to a large picture of his father
on wall R. On his touching a spring,
the picture turns on a hinge, and a hiding-
place is revealed in the wall.*]

This hiding-place
Is known to no one else. Step quickly in.

[*HERNANI bows and enters retreat. The
picture is closed.*]

DON RUY. Antonio?

SERVANT enters.

SERVANT. My lord?

DON RUY. What of the king?

SERVANT. He has twice knocked, my lord.

DON RUY. Admit him straight.

Send too this message to her lady's room

That I expect her here. See to it at once.

[SERVANT bows and exits.

DON RUY. Now is she bound to me more firm and
sure

Than holy church could bind her. She shall be told

His life is in my hands; nay—more than this—

That on her own life his does now depend,

That I may hold hers too. For with most women

Love works in them thus strangely: what they them-
selves

Will suffer for Love's sake, they cannot endure

Those whom they love shall suffer. So, a woman,

Though she will follow one she loves to death,

Will seldom lead him there. When she is told

The day she dies, he dies, will she not argue

Something like this: "What would it be if I

Struck him to death? What could that be but
murder?

And though in this case I do not deal the blow,

Knowing the thing I do, will it not be

Myself who kills him? How shall I answer that

Beside my own offence? What sin is it

To set a term upon another's life,

When to conclude one's own, to anticipate

The intent of God, is a so dreadful act?

What right have I, having the power of death,

The moment I am dead, to take my life ?
Thought cannot justify it."—Then may she not
Continue on like this : " My years are few.
Many may pass and leave me still the means
To love and to be loved. The duke is old,
And may not be so favoured by Nature
To live until my autumn." Thoughts like these
Will serve as check 'gainst outrage on herself
More than a thousand eyes could. And though I hold
her

Upon such thoughts as these, why should I mind ?
To have what I would have but for a day—
To have it!—that's the thing. Age is a fool
Ever to look an hour beyond the present.
Think as she will, so she is mine to-day,
I'll not resent her counting the to-morrows,
Besides, I might that way draw comfort too.
For oft the gnarled and age-bent tree beholds
Many a sapling grow to strength and die.
I'll treat her kindly, fill her lap with riches,
And trust to Time to turn her to my wishes.

Enter SERVANT.

SERVANT. The king, my lord !

*Enter DON CARLOS, followed by a number
of retainers. All wear breastplates, and are
fully armed.*

DON CARLOS. Aha !

DON RUY. Your Majesty !

DON CARLOS. My good de Silva,
What villainies are you at in your old age

That you employ blind servants on your watch-tower,

And deaf men in your halls?

DON RUY.

My lord, I have not

In my employ one either blind or deaf.

DON CARLOS. Then, by St. John, you feed a lazy crew!

A set of kitcheners and mattress-men

That will not mind their posts.

DON RUY.

How, my good lord?

DON CARLOS. How? Is it customary for a king
To be kept waiting? To have to knock three
times

Upon a subject's door, ere it is opened?

Is't necessary that his followers should announce

His presence, as in music-plays, by singing

A chorus in the court-yard? I should have thought

The music of our harness and the stamping

Of a thousand restive hoofs had been enough

To make the dullest of your doormice servants

Open his eyes and listen! Why this delay?

Why is your bolt thus cautiously opposed

Against my coming in?

DON RUY.

I'm very sorry

Your Majesty is offended.

DON CARLOS.

Well, well, well.

Perhaps I blame too early. I'm forgetting

How dangerous the times are. When armed robbers

Infest a country, householders do right

To double bar their doors. It is this man—

This rogue they call Hernani I should blame
For what else were a slight. I have no doubt
'Twas he your bolts were set so firm against ?

DON RUY. My lord——

DON CARLOS. You heard the villain was at large,
And *in extremis*. Desperate men are truly
Not to be smiled on through wide open doors.
Besides,
The last seen of the rogue was very close here.
Nay, my informant thought he saw the fellow
Actually turn in here—into your courtyard !
Dressed as a friar. Say ! Have you seen this man ?
[A pause.]

My good de Silva, have you seen this man ?

DON RUY. I have, my lord.

DON CARLOS. And spoken with him ?

DON RUY. Yes.

DON CARLOS. Where is he now ?

DON RUY. My lord, I cannot tell.

DON CARLOS. D'you mean you do not know ?

DON RUY. I mean, my lord,

I cannot tell you.

DON CARLOS. Cannot ? What prevents you ?

DON RUY. My given word.

DON CARLOS. Your word !

DON RUY. I promised him——

DON CARLOS. Well ? Well ? You promised him ?

DON RUY. Asylum here.

DON CARLOS. Knowing the man he was ?

DON RUY. No, my good lord.

DON CARLOS. You mean you made' your promise,
thinking him
What he professed?

DON RUY. I thought him so, my lord.

DON CARLOS. Well?

DON RUY. My lord?

DON CARLOS. Where is the fellow?

This robber

Let him be fetched! [*Pause.*] Now, by the holy
Peter!

Duke, you will make me angry! [*Pause.*] What!
do you stand

Fingering your beard when I command a thing?

DON RUY. I hesitate, my lord, between two ways—
Obedience to my king or to my honour.

DON CARLOS. You hesitate whether you will obey
me!

DON RUY. I crave your patience, sire. Turn for a
moment

Your eyes upon these walls. Each way they'll meet
The eyes of a de Silva; men who bore
The name which I now bear, and who, by the
high

Nobility of their lives and loyal service
Rendered to Spain, have writ their names upon
The pages of her history. First Don Silvius,
Thrice Roman Consul, great founder of our house;
Then Galceran, the friend of Mauregato,
Unto whose memory tribute still is paid
By men of old Castile. My famous namesake,

Don Ruy, Knight of St. John and Calatrava,
Victor of Antequera, Suez, Nijar,
With his great son beside him. Noble Gaspar ;
The wise Don Vasquez ; here Dom Jayme the
bold ;

Don Blas, Don Christoval—who has not heard
The name of Christoval ? On Escalona's field
The king, unhorsed, bleeding, and hemmed about
By a deep ring of foes, and his white plume
The mark of every eye, cried : " Christoval !
Come to my aid ! "—Whereat did Christoval
Spur to his side, cleaving his passage through
The waves of steel that surged about his master
And, springing to the ground, call to the king :
" Give me your plume, my lord, and take my
horse ! "

Would any here believe that that fine blood
Ran in these veins, did I betray a man
Unto his foe, whom I had promised help to ?
Nay, did I so betray him, I'd confess
I'm not descended from such men as these,
But am a thief that's stole a mighty name—
A precious diadem for a worthless brow—
And prove it by this act.

DON CARLOS. You would be known, then,
As Ruy de Silva, friend of pillagers,
Who let a promise made unto an outlaw
Stand in the way of duty to his king ?
A fine conclusion, truly, to the tale
We have just listened to.

DON RUY. I would be known
As one, my lord, who never broke his word.

DON CARLOS. Do you refuse to give this fellow to
me?

DON RUY. I must refuse, my lord.

DON CARLOS. Be careful, sir!

DON RUY. My lord——

DON CARLOS. Ha! Roderigo?

DON RODERIGO. Your Majesty?

DON CARLOS. Surround the chateau! Call more
men across

To do it thoroughly! Let every rod of ground
Be thickly guarded by them. Go! Form a ring
The villain cannot break through;
I'm going to burn this fox out of his hole. }

[DON RODERIGO bows and exits.

[To DON RUY.] By heaven! I'll teach you to insult
me, sir!

To keep closed fist when I say "open it!"
We'll start the bonfire here. These masterpieces
Should make a good beginning. Oil and varnish—
What could be better! This fine gentleman
Shall be the initial stick that makes the blaze.
The founder of your house, I think you called
him?

A fiery-looking personage, in faith,
Well suited to our purpose. Rip me that canvas!

DON RUY. Stand back! My lord, you shall not
thus insult me!

Not while I have the strength to hold a sword.

DON CARLOS. What! You defy me! Matias—
arrest the duke!

Enter DONA SOL, ladies in attendance, pages, etc.

DON CARLOS. One moment! Hold! What
pageantry is here?

Ah! pretty interruption! Whom do I see?
The Dona de Silva, and so dressed?

[*Pause.*

By James! An excellent idea! Ha, ha!

Duke, you may keep your bandit. In his stead
I'll take this lady. She shall be your hostage.

Fairest of hostages! I'll promise, duke,
I'll not importune you to make exchange.

Hernani's safe while I have Dona Sol.

Conduct the lady hither, good Matias.

[MATIAS advances towards DONA SOL when the
picture behind which HERNANI is hidden
flies open, and HERNANI springs to the
ground.]

HERNANI [*to one of the duke's retainers*]. Give me
thy sword fellow!

[*Snatches sword from scabbard and faces*
MATIAS.]

Back to thy place,
Thou red-faced rogue! Or fill thy room in hell!

DON CARLOS. What's this? The fox turned tiger?
Give him space.

[MATIAS retires.]

Effective bait! So we have caught you, sir?

HERNANI. If you would not before this company
Declare yourself a coward and make your name
A by-word through the land, stand forth and meet
me!

Were I a nameless man, you should not scorn
To let your sword touch mine, since you can covet
A woman's love which you know well is mine.
But to a bloody enmity we two
Stand the opposéd heirs. Upon the scaffold
Your father slew my father, and his wide lands
Scattered to strangers—not the first of whom
But less deserved, by any quality
That makes a man, to hold the smallest division
Than he to have the whole. I am the son
Of John of Aragon, Duke of Cardona,
Marquis of Monroy, Count of Albatera!
Stand forth and draw your sword, or let your fear
In the face of this mixed gathering proclaim you
Your mother's bastard son!

DON CARLOS [*drawing his sword*]. Let no man
stir
To interfere between us!

DONA SOL [*throwing herself between them*]. Ah!
Stay your hands!

One moment! Hear me speak! [*Kneels to the king.*]

Your Majesty——

Upon my knees, as I would plead to Heaven,
I plead to you.

Unto God's distant ear our lips do pray;
And He, from whom there are no secrets hid,

Who knows what prompts each heart-beat, and doth
know

How little we deserve those things we ask,
Can yet in His great clemency stoop down
From Heaven to answer us.

I plead to you who fill an earthly throne,
So far beneath, to stoop as God can stoop,
To hear as God can hear, so far above,
To show me mercy!

DON CARLOS. Lady!—

DONA SOL. O! my lord,
What gift is in your hands!—my lover's life,
And my life's happiness. Is happiness
A thing so easily found that you who have
The giving of it now will turn away,
Indifferent to my asking? Happiness—
A woman's happiness!—that stands for Love.
If I were old, with but a little space
Of life left owing to me—if in that space
I might be happy—would you kill the means?
O! if you would—though such an action meant
Only an hour's loss—you'd have a heart
More hard, more cold, more feelingless than steel,
Dead to the hand-touch of humanity.
But I who kneel to you, sir, am not old.
It is a young girl's head that bends before you,
In supplication for her lover's life.
O, sir! Be generous! See—I lift my eyes.
Would you these eyes strike blind? For them the
earth

Can never more have light when once the life
I plead for is no more. Then, will you take
Their preciousness away?

[*Buries her face in her hands.*

Alas! poor words!

How weakly do you fall!

DON CARLOS.

Lady, arise.

[*He raises her. Then turns to HERNANI.*

My cousin Aragon—for so I now will call you—

Approach.

[*HERNANI advances.*

This lady loves you. Prove yourself worthy
To be possessor of a gift so rare,
And from to-day, despite of what is past,
You shall be held the worthiest of my subjects.

HERNANI. Is it Don Carlos speaks?

DON CARLOS.

It is the king.

DONA SOL [*kneeling*]. I cannot find one word to
speak my thanks.

But if a woman's tears can speak for her

Let mine so serve me now.

[*She kisses the king's hands.*

DON CARLOS [*to HERNANI*]. We will not let the
quarrel of our fathers

Remain a day more ours. They two have answered
Each one Death's dreadful summons; 'tis not for us,
Their sons, to let the effects of their deep hatred
Add to their punishments. Receive this collar—
And with it wear again those titles freely
Which rightly are your own.

HERNANI [*kneeling*]. My anger's gone.
The cloud that dulled my life is swept away ;
And in its stead a blaze of golden joy
Rides warmly o'er my heart. What can I say ?
How make atonement for the generous loss
Of those who fell in my mistaken cause ?
God let their faith stand for them in His judgment,
And all their sins be mine !

DON CARLOS. Come ! To the chapel,
I'll see you two made one ere I depart.
De Silva ? Ha ! Still frowning ? Worthy cousin
What is it offends you now ?

DON RUY. Your majesty
Has scarcely need to ask that question.

DON CARLOS. I think I have. My friend, there was
a time
When to have frowned upon a kingly wish
Had got you into trouble. I have said
I wish this lady wed to this gentleman.
I wish it ! [*The duke bows.*] Understand all. This
union

Of the great houses Aragon and Silva
Is ordered by the king. If any man
Speak otherwise than properly of it,
He disrespects us. The Duke de Silva
This lady's hand surrenders by command !
Go ! Find a priest. And when the words are said
That ratify your love, let's all away
To Saragossa, where, at close of day,

There shall be revelry and what is right
To grace the first hours of your bridal night.
Come! To the chapel, friends!

[They all go out save DON RUY, who stands motionless, his brow dark, and an angry gleam in his eyes.]



ACT IV

SCENE I. *A terrace of the Palace de Silva. Beyond are the gardens, down to which, on the right, run stone steps. It is night, and the terrace is lighted up. Left of stage is the ball-room, approached by steps—right is the bridal chamber. A dance is in progress and the sound of music is heard. On the terrace richly dressed ladies and gentlemen move about, many of them with their masks on.*

DON MATIAS [*seated down L.*]. Our friend the bandit——

DON RODERIGO. Pst !

DON MATIAS. I beg his pardon. Our friend, his Grace of the mountains, and his girl-bride will to-night be numbered among those who think being alive a very pleasant experience. Marriage has ever been an amusing pastime for the newly married. Here's to Adam for instituting it.

A LADY. What is it you say, Don Matias ?

DON MATIAS. I say, dear lady, that cherry-blossom is usually found growing on cherry trees.

LADY. We need no telling to know that.

DON MATIAS. Likewise, if you are searching for apple-blossoms, I'd advise you to look for it on apple trees; for that is where you are most likely to find it. As to orange-blossom, I never knew it to grow anywhere but on an orange tree.

LADY. For whom is it you think being alive to-night will be a pleasant experience?

DON MATIAS. Ho! Did you catch so much!

LADY. Come now!

DON MATIAS. Why, for all ladies who, rightly or wrongly, wore orange-blossom in their hair to-day.

LADY. Fie, fie! You speak naughtily.

DON MATIAS. I am endeavouring to adapt my speech to the spirit of the evening. When eyes are bright and lips are laughing, let the tongue be forgiven that takes liberties.

[*Music. Movement.*]

A GENTLEMAN. May I dance with you, lady?

LADY. What dance is it, sir?

GENTLEMAN. Faith, I know not. Whatever it is you may lead me.

DON MATIAS. Ay. Put a halter on him and lead him away.

LADY. May I lead you any dance?

GENTLEMAN. Freely.

DON MATIAS. Alas, poor mule!

LADY. Do you know me, sir?

GENTLEMAN. I know some one you are not.

DON MATIAS. He means his wife. I never yet met the man that didn't know when it was not his wife he was talking to. Be warned by me, lady. This man is a husband. I recognise him in spite of his casing. Very much a husband, I assure you, for I am acquainted with the lady who made one of him. She would be here to-night herself, dancing fandangos with the best of you, were she not due to make something more of this gentleman before many days are out—and dancing fandangos is not in the prescription. [*LADY and GENTLEMAN move away.*] Where is the king, Roddie?

DON RODERIGO. Returned to the Palace.

DON MATIAS. So soon? Or is it so late? Ought we to be going? I pray thee, let us not outstay our welcome, which were an easy thing to do.

DON RODERIGO. The king left early. He is occupied with state affairs.

DON MATIAS. Ha! He puts it that way, does he?—state affairs. Well—who would have thought this love-chase would have ended in the way it has? Three men in love with the same woman—a king, a duke, and a bandit.

DON RODERIGO. Hush!

DON MATIAS. I beg his pardon. Who wins the lady? Neither the king nor the duke. You know Roddie, I cannot forgive his Grace of the uplands

for addressing me a few hours back as a red-faced rogue. I have called many a man a rogue in my time, but I have never gone so far as to add alliteration to insult. I have called men thieving rogues, which a good many of 'em are, lying rogues, cunning rogues, villainous rogues; but I never went to the length of calling a man a red-faced rogue.

DON SANCHO. Has anything been seen of the duke?

DON RODERIGO. The Duke de Silva takes no part in these festivities.

DON MATIAS. No. The duke is occupied with state affairs, like the king. Probably more so. Therefore, he cometh not to look on while another man eateth pastry stolen from his own larder.

DON SANCHO. Nay, do not laugh at him, Matias. The de Silvas are a proud race, and I fear this loss will be taken badly. It will touch de Silva's pride as deeply as it has his heart.

DON FRANCISCO. There is no doubt he loved his cousin.

DON SANCHO. And when a man his age loves——

DON MATIAS. He is bound to make an ass of himself anyway.

DON SANCHO. I caught sight of him as we left for Saragossa. Sixty years had streaked his hair with grey; an hour had turned it white.

DON RODERIGO. He loved the lady no more than the king did ; and I swear I can see no change in the colour of his Majesty's hair.

DON FRANCISCO. With all respect, a king's love——

DON MATIAS. Is God-like.

DON FRANCISCO. Eh ?

DON MATIAS. It ranges over a very wide field.

DON FRANCISCO. And like the chameleon is of more than one colour.

DON MATIAS. That's to say that when the prettiest woman in his neighbourhood is dark the king's love is dark ; when she is fair, it is fair. When she is fair and married, then it is a fair and a dark love all in one.

DON RODERIGO. Nay, but in this instance the king proved his love.

DON FRANCISCO. How ?

DON MATIAS. Ay, tell us how.

DON RODERIGO. By pardoning his rival. Had he loved the lady less, he would never have surrendered her.

DON MATIAS. One thing is certain. If the king had taken the lady for himself, he would not be occupied at this moment with state affairs.

[*Movement on stage. General laughter and chatter, music. Then all go off into ball-room except DON MATIAS, SANCHE, RODERIGO,*

and FRANCISCO. *At the back a figure in black is dimly seen standing up left.*

DON SANCHE. Who is the gentleman in black who stands so silent in the shadow yonder. [*They turn.*] Does any one know?

DON RODERIGO. I have asked myself that question more than once to-night,

DON SANCHE. He wears his mask very seriously. One would think he had a reason for not disclosing himself.

DON FRANCISCO. It is the Duke de Soma. He wishes to attract attention, and knows the only way he can do so is by letting no one know who he is.

DON RODERIGO. No. I have spoken with de Soma.

DON SANCHE. Look! He moves.

DON FRANCISCO. As if he knew we were watching him.

DON SANCHE. And resented it.

[Figure moves slowly across back of stage.]

DON MATIAS. Speak to him, Roddie.

[DON RODERIGO intercepts figure at back.]

DON RODERIGO. Sir. [*Figure halts. Pause.*] It is a fine night. [*Suddenly DON RODERIGO recoils.*] Saints in heaven! [*Moves quickly down to his companions.*] My friends—we are within a few yards of the devil's own cousin. I have seen hell flames.

DON MATIAS [*striding forward*]. One moment, sir. My friend here is of opinion that you are somewhat nearly related to the devil. Is that so? Do you come to us from below—in a word—from hell?

FIGURE. I do not come from Hell, sir. I go there.

[*The figure passes silently off.*]

DON RODERIGO. Did you hear that?

DON FRANCISCO. Let us follow him!

DON RODERIGO. For what purpose? You heard where he said he was going.

DON MATIAS [*still standing centre, gazing in direction in which figure disappeared*]. A most inconsiderate fellow, 'pon my soul! For a man bound direct for Hell to take bridal festivities *en route*—that shows an unpardonable want of good-breeding. He could have gone round.

DON RODERIGO. Look where he goes, Matias.

DON MATIAS [*by steps*]. He's crossing the gardens. There—now the shadows have him. I can see him no longer.

DON SANCHE [*quietly*]. This is very strange, Roddie.

DON RODERIGO. Tut, tut! Think no more of it. Come into the light and laugh.

DON SANCHE. It's very strange.

DON RODERIGO. Some stupid joker that doesn't

know the meaning of occasion. Come into the ball-room. Ha!

[From either side enter torch-bearers who stand in line at back holding their torches above their heads. The stage is now brilliantly lighted. A fanfare of trumpets. Then enter from ball-room a great stream of guests, who form a passage between the ball-room and the bridal chamber.]

DON FRANCISCO. What does this mean?

DON SANCHE. The bride and bridegroom are going to bid us—Good-night.

[Another fanfare.]

A VOICE. Long life to the Duke and Duchess of Aragon!

ALL. Long life to the Duke of Aragon! Long life to the Duchess!

[HERNANI and DONA SOL, holding each other by the hand, appear. They stand for several moments at the top of steps and smilingly acknowledge the enthusiastic cheering and good wishes which are uttered on all sides.]

DON SANCHE. All happiness attend your marriage, Duke.

HERNANI. If it does not, my friend, there's no such thing

As happiness in the world.

DON FRANCISCO. Why, that is true
Since it is Venus' self that is your bride,

DON RODERIGO. You wear around your neck the
Toison d'Or.

Ah ! Duke—a collar far more beautiful
Will grace your neck to-night ; two lovely arms,
Linked with the clasp of love.

HERNANI. My worthy friends—

LADY [to DONA SOL]. Accept this gift of lilies.

May your love

Be still as fresh as these fresh lily flowers,
When time has turned your maiden tresses' hue
As white as is their own !

DONA SOL. I cannot find
One word to speak my thanks. Speak for me, love.

HERNANI. Can I say more than thy dear lips have
said ?

There are occasions when the tongue can do
The heart but feeble service ; tell the full
Of what is felt no more than for blind eyes
It can express the beauties of the world.
We who receive your kindnesses to-night
Shall think of them long after you, the givers,
Have quite forgot them ; and thank you through the
years.

We shall remember them while in our hearts
We yet recall the gladness of this night.
Your kindness and our present happiness
Must ever be associate. From my dear bride

And from myself accept sincerest thanks,
And with them our "good-night."

ALL. Long life to the Duke and Duchess of
Aragon!

All happiness to the Duke and Duchess of Aragon!

DON FRANCISCO. Light us a way there, linksmen!
Where's the Music?

Enter MUSICIANS.

We'll make our homeward way not as we came,
But in a gay procession.

[General movement.]

Strike us a tune, musicians. Let it be
Something that speaks of love. Starlight and song—
Love cannot ask for more!

*[To the accompaniment of music the guests
pass off stage, descending by the steps up R.
down to the gardens. DON MATIAS is the
last to leave.]*

DON MATIAS. Sir, a word in your ear. Nay, 'tis not
a challenge. Do you know me, sir?

HERNANI. The Duke of Roxano, I believe.

DON MATIAS. I am very glad to hear you say so.
Good-night. *[Shakes hands.]* Lady!

[He bows low, and goes off after the others.]
*[Torchtlights are seen winding through the
gardens. Then, as if at a little distance,
the voices of men and women are heard
singing. HERNANI and DONA SOL stand
listening.]*

Song.

When Beauty's eyes are lit with love,
There are not in the heavens above
Two stars so bright,
So filled with light,
As Beauty's eyes when lit with love.

When Beauty's lips do softly sigh
In glad content, her lover nigh,
Can anywhere
A sound compare
With Beauty's lips, that softly sigh ?

When Beauty's limbs do rest in sleep,
Then lover's eyes glad vigil keep.
Not anywhere
Is sight so fair
As Beauty's self, when she's asleep.

[*The voices of the singers die gradually away.
There is a pause ; then DONA SOL raises her
face to HERNANI, and their lips meet in a
passionate kiss.*

SCENE II. *The bridal-chamber. Same as in Act I.*
HERNANI is standing by open window, looking out into the night.

HERNANI. How near to Heaven am I. You gentle stars

That shed your silver gleams upon the earth,
Is there in all God's space beyond your lights
A joy comparable with this great joy
My love doth lead me to? If now my life,
However short, should be my substitute
For Heaven, should I complain? How calm the
night is!

It is as if all nature knew my love,
And in kind sympathy thus fair did make
The consummating hour. Let me not think!
Hark! What is that? A nightingale's soft note
Rising from yonder coppice to the moon.
Sweet bird, there is unkindness in your song;
For unto hearts beating with ecstasy
Melody's touch is pain. Ha! Do you cease?
Did you then hear my words? Sweet bird, sing on
Your tuneful pipe doth lift me from myself
In light distraction. When a man's heart with joy
Is full as mine is now—sing on, dear bird,
And pain me that way rather. Still he's silent,
As if my finding fault offended him.
What little cloud is this moves o'er the sky,
Like a dark ship-sail on a moon-lit sea?

A cloud upon my sky! Look through it stars!
Let it not mask the beauty of this night
Even by such a little as itself.
The bird is silent still. It must have been
Alarm put off his song. The nightingale
Is lovers' own sweet songster—his a song
Which never should be broken. It may be
Some passing step did fright him, and anon
He will be heard again. My bridal night!
Make haste, make haste, my love! O, I might
think

By this long waiting that it was not love
For which I waited. I will think instead
It is thy maiden beauties that are envious
Which do bewitch thy hands and make delay,
To keep thee still some moments more from me.

[The door at back opens quietly, and DON RUY enters. He descends noiselessly down stage, and stands silent a little behind HERNANI.]

HERNANI. How loudly ticks the clock! It could
not beat
Time's passing louder if, instead of joy,
It were some dreadful doom I went towards.

[DON RUY touches him on the shoulder. HERNANI turns quickly. Then seeing who it is, recoils. The two men look into each other's eyes for several moments in silence.]

HERNANI *[in a whisper]*. What do you want?

DON RUY. Have you forgot your promise?

HERNANI. [*As before.*] What do you mean?

DON RUY. This is the hour I choose
When you must do the thing you promised me.

HERNANI. The thing I—promised you?

DON RUY. Did you not say
Upon the instant I demanded it
You would yield up your life? The time is come.

HERNANI. Yield up my life! What! Yield my
life to-night!

DON RUY. To-night.

HERNANI. Ah, no! Not—not to-night!

DON RUY. To-night.

HERNANI. If you possess one spark of human
pity,

I beg you show me but so much of mercy,
To let me live until the morning breaks.

DON RUY. As well to ask for all as for so much.
Live till the morning! Live until the morning!
How would you spend the hours my mercy gave?
Clasped in a woman's arms whose love was mine
Until you stole her from me! Live until morning!
Why then I give you all life has to give!
And at my own deep cost. I who am robbed—
Robbed of a woman's love! Cheated by stealth—
To show such kindness to the man that robbed me
Live till the morning! Ha! And I? And I?
How should I spend to-night? A thousand years,

Racked on the rack of hell, could not exceed
Those hours of agony.

HERNANI.

O hush! My God

[DONA SOL *has entered clad in her nightrobe. Her hair hangs loosely, drawn behind her neck. She stands in silence L., a look of fear upon her face. The two men are turned towards her. There is a long pause.*

DONA SOL. What does this mean? What brings you here, my lord?

[*Another pause. HERNANI's eyes are fixed upon her. Suddenly he cries out, going towards her.*

HERNANI. I will not do the thing you ask of me!

I will not do it! No! I will not do it!

DON RUY. You will not keep your promise?

HERNANI.

I have said!

You ask me more than I have strength to do.

DONA SOL. Hernani! Speak to me! O! speak my love!—

Ah, God! What fearful look is in thine eyes?

Tell me what thing it is this man doth ask thee?

HERNANI. It matters not, since I have said to him

I will not do it.

DON RUY. You will not keep your promise!

Have you forgotten then the hour you made it?

Must I remind you? And my words: "You give
me

That which a Spanish nobleman does not betray."

Is thy blood noble? Dost know the sense of
honour?

Is thy blood noble? Is thy name Aragon?

Did I fulfil the compact that we made?

I pledged you my protection. Did I falter?

I braved the king's own anger—stood between
you

And those who sought your death; and when they
threaten'd

By ways dishonourable to drive you forth,

I drew my sword prepared to give my life

In your defence, rather than prove myself

A traitor to my word. Ay! Silva's towers,

Her lofty battlements should from their height

Have crashed to earth in ruin o'er my head

Ere I had done what vilely shalt thou do,

If thou dost break thy word!

DONA SOL.

Alas! What word?

DON RUY. He promised me his life—to yield it
me

The moment it was asked.

DONA SOL.

Yield you his life!

It is not his to give. His life is mine.

This day 'twas given me.

DON RUY.

His life is mine.

DONA SOL. No, no!

DON RUY. 'Tis mine. I hold the prior claim.
[*He turns to HERNANI.*

Fulfil your promise, or consent to be
Dishonoured evermore.

HERNANI. How must I do
This dreadful thing you ask me?

DON RUY. Here's the means.
[*Hands phial.*

DONA SOL. Ah!—no! Hernani! Stay! One
moment hear me!

HERNANI. Dear love, my word is given. I must
obey.

DONA SOL. Mercy, my lord! I kneel to you for
mercy.
Release him from his word! O! let him live.

DON RUY. Dost kneel to me, clad for thy bridal
bed?
Extend to me white arms, bared for his joy
That stole thee from me? Dost thou entreat me
now
That I shall show thee mercy?

DONA SOL. Yes, my lord.
A maiden wife, I kneel to you to spare
My husband's life.

DON RUY. I will not listen to thee!
Rise from thy knees! Thou dost but madden me.
Thy virgin beauty only mocks my loss.
[*Turns to HERNANI*
Fulfil your promise. Drink!

DONA SOL.

Hernani! No!

One moment yet! O, hear me yet a moment!

I have so much to say—so many things.

I cannot think! Alas! You make me tremble!

One moment!—

DON RUY.

Drink!

DONA SOL.

No! No! No! No!

Hernani!—Ah!—

[She seizes him by the arm.]

What would'st thou do?

HERNANI.

My love——

DONA SOL. Thou would'st not do this thing!

[Panting.]

Didst thou not say?

Hernani, dear!—My husband!— *[Half turning.]* O!
in pity!——HERNANI. Hush, hush! Thou art my wife. To
thee my honour,

The honour of the house of Aragon,

Now thou dost bear its name, must be as dear

As it is to myself. We must not stain it.

Give me thy hand. Dear love, my sleep to-night

Must be the sleep of death. I must obey

This stern command, or be for ever shamed.

It was thy hurt just now did so unman me,

That I should bring such sorrow where I loved,

Made me forget how deeply I was pledged.

DONA SOL. Alas! What ill-discerning spirit was
it

Enticed thee to this hour?

HERNANI. That of revenge ;
Which blinded me and led me on through darkness
Along a madman's way. Thus are we visited
Who arrogate ourselves God's punishers.
In vengeance' name I raised an angry hand
To kill my brother : my arrow is come back
To lodge in my own heart.

DONA SOL. O ! think not so.
Disprove his words, my lord—open the store
Of kindness I know is in your heart ;
Cancel the bond ; give back the fatal word.

DON RUY [*to HERNANI*]. Fulfil your promise !

DONA SOL. Ha! Now is well proved
The worth of thy nobility! It is no more
Than a fair mask, a gilded imitation
That I mistook for true. A practised pretence—
A seeming noble structure from without,
But rotten from the core! Cruelty never
Lived with nobility. It cannot dwell
Save in corrupted bloods. Thou'rt called de Silva!
It is a name—I'll say it to thy face—
Thou hast not right to!

DON RUY. What !

DONA SOL [*beside herself*]. I'll say't again!—
If thou wilt show this cruelty, thy blood
Is basely tainted!

DON RUY. Ha !—

DONA SOL. Dost know the secret?—
What wife it was that bore the name de Silva

That let a base born fellow in her bed
And helped him breed his kind? Canst answer me?

DON RUY. Ay! Thus! [*Stabs her.*] There is thy
answer.

HERNANI. Ah! Thou villain!

DONA SOL. Hernani! Ho! To me!—to me!
Hernani!

[*Throws herself into his arms.*]

DON RUY. What have I done? What drops of
blood are these

Drip from my gleaming knife upon the floor?—
O hateful jealousy! O! chill remorse!
Now what wild rage exacted let my shame;
And with the selfsame instrument that sends
A young girl's soul to heaven, hurl headlong down
My murderer's soul to hell. Here is my place—
Here at the foot of this unstained bed;
So let the morning find me. O! this blow,
Better shall tell than any tongue could tell it
My story to the world!

[*He stabs himself and falls dead at the foot of
bed.*]

DONA SOL. May Heaven forgive him,
Hernani, I am dying. O'er my life
Death's icy hand is closing.

HERNANI. O, my love!

DONA SOL. My dearest husband! Lift me in thine
arms
And bear me to my bed.

HERNANI.

Why, so I will.

And then beside thee will I lay myself
To be thy fellow in eternal sleep.

DONA SOL. Not in eternal sleep, but in such life—
Where all is understood and is peace
For ever ever more. O! Fare thee well.

[Dies.

HERNANI. What! Wilt thou leave me? O, her
spirit's fled!

Darkness is in her eyes: their light is gone!
Now might I look and look in them and never
Read one poor syllable there. All's empty now—
All's set, all's cold, all's dark and meaningless.
It is as if God's hand had from bright sunshine
Passed o'er the heavens and put out every light.
Dear lids, be closed. Stay. One last loving kiss
Here where I've seen thy tender spirit share
My every joy and sorrow—smiles and tears—
Sunlight and shadow. O, my love was gentle—
The dearest trait in woman's fellowship—
Yet could she be so bold in my defence
That she lies stricken here. Come to thy bed:
Then quickly will I rid me of the gloom
Of this sad caravansery, and go
Into that mystery-world where thou hast gone.

[*He carries her to bed and lays her tenderly
down.*

How like a fresh-cut flower does she lie,
Upon whose maiden blanch a drop of blood
Has splashed its crimson stain. O! busy Death,

Thou hast not from Life's garden ever cut
A flower half so fair. This was the queen
Of all fair things that breathed upon the earth,
And thou hast taken her!
But O! she was much more: she was my love.
And O! so much, much more; she was my bride.
Now, may'st thou, Death, be such a friend to me
As thou hast been mine enemy. Come here,
Thou poison-loaded cup which jealousy
With his mad fingers filled. Come! quickly do
Thy evil work that now my will makes good.
I'll drain thee to the dregs. [*Drinks.*]

O! lightning drug!

Thou art a proper servant!—All is done—
Save to do this—to give my dying kiss.

[*He kisses DONA SOL and dies.*]

CURTAIN.

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